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COMICS SCENE RETURNS with the magic of Disney's **Aladdin**...the mystery of the **X-Men** cartoons... and the madness (so to speak) of **Will Elder**. It's in **COMICS SCENE #30, on sale October 22, 1992.**

WORD BALLOONS

Radio Heroes

Static crackling, ear pressed close to the speaker, hear the maniacal laughter, the desperate words, the brutal gunshots. Listen, breath quickly sucked in with excitement, to the adventure. Heroism is in the air. And in those golden days, it was on the radio.

What an arena of imagination! And—I must admit—despite my fondness for comics and pulps, movies and books, TV shows and animation, radio has *always* been my favorite medium. Why? It's quite simple. As you listen to a radio drama—voiced dialogue, sound FX and music (the trademarks of visual and electronic entertainment)—paint a picture, you're like a reader with a good book. You *imagine* all the rest.

Radio drama isn't exactly thriving. It survives, to a certain extent, in the humorous ads of such masters as Stan Freberg, ex-partners Dick Orkin & Bert Berdis (who, as Dick & Bert, did the Chicken-Man superhero spoof of the '70s), Stiller & Meara and others...in the poignant monologues of Garrison Keillor...and most bizarrely, in the burgeoning audiobook field. These audiobook adaptations feature the book's author or a skilled actor performing a (usually) abridged reading. Characters are mimicked, given different voices. And in the best of these adaptations, original music and sound FX add to the excitement. Essentially, audiobooks are radio drama without the radio.

Comedy, music and drama were the mainstays of the Golden Age of Radio, but for those of us devoted to the comics scene, it's the *heroes* that mattered. Countless comic book and strip characters—like Superman, Little Orphan Annie and Flash Gordon—got the radio adventure treatment. Heroes who originated elsewhere—like the Shadow, who began in the pulps—found wider fame on radio. And those born on radio—like the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet—would often go on to comics, movies and TV.

What grand excitement! And *I* wanted to be part of that, so while at West Virginia's Bethany College from 1975-78, I wrote, directed and produced six half-hour radio dramas and 150 episodes of a five-minute radio soap opera spoof for the college station WVBC. With my colleagues Tim Smith, John Sayers and Harry Mainzer, I co-wrote and co-produced 20 segments of a sketch-comedy half-hour show. Mostly recorded (on audiotape) by engineer extraordinaire Steve Coe, these projects relied heavily on music, sound FX and a dedicated cast that included guest stars Vincent (*Helter Skelter*) Bugliosi and the legendary Mel Blanc.

With commercial radio drama all but dead, I ended up editing magazines, but my love for radio has never wavered. And that's why I was very much intrigued when writer Rich Harvey tracked down producer Peter B. Lewis. After all, Lewis brought *The Fantastic Four* to life as radio heroes. You can read more about *The Fantastic Four* on page 53. Me? I just pressed an ear close to a speaker and *listened* to the adventure—the show's first four weeks (20 episodes, a taped relic of my college radio days).

And what great fun it still is! True, the original Stan Lee dialogue—already more than a decade old when the show was produced—sometimes seems, as Lewis notes, "corny." And the sound FX aren't state-of-the-art for the '90s. Nevertheless, the performances by Robert Maxwell, Cynthia Adler, Jim Pappas, Jerry Terheyden and the very droll Bill Murray (frequently sounding like his brother, Brian Doyle-Murray) are a scream. Terheyden is particularly dramatic, in the segments I heard, as the misunderstood Mole-Man, the enigmatic Miracle-Man, the noble Sub-Mariner (sort of a Ricardo Montalban-Fernando Lamas tone) and the evil Dr. Doom.

Curiously, I had just reread in a *Marvel Masterworks* volume the very Stan Lee-Jack Kirby stories adapted for these episodes. Listening, I recalled the amazing Kirby visuals that revolutionized the comics scene...pictured just how the shows were recorded in a cramped studio much like my old college workplace...and painted new scenes in my imagination of a live-action Thing, a blazing Human Torch, a flexible Mr. Fantastic and an unseen Invisible Girl, all battling for justice.

I listened, breath sucked in with excitement. Heroism was in the air. What an arena of imagination still exists for the Shadow and Chicken-Man, the Lone Ranger and the Fantastic Four! How marvelous it would be to bring back the adventure, static crackling and ear against the speaker, to where it once belonged.

—David McDonnell/Editor

LETTERING

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...Thank you. Your magazine continues to deliver a consistent array of entertaining subject matter and delightful full page illustrations. For this, you have my unwavering financial support, no matter the cost.

I relate a lot to this book because I love animation, as well as comic books, of course. So I just want to say thanks for your extended articles on *Beauty & the Beast*. The illustrations were really great and are highly appreciated.

Your *Fish Police* article was a very *very* pleasant surprise (CS #26). Jeanne Romano is quite an imaginative writer. I wish her the best of success.

Upon seeing *Fern Gully*, my heart raced with uncontrollable awe. I had seen the previews. I had seen the nifty cardboard floor display. I knew this was going to be a work of art. The story was powerful and, most of all, *alive*. It carried me into a *different world*.

And the flowers, not since *Fantasia* was there such a floral display of magnificence.

Sadly, the ending seemed disappointing. That something special, real, genuine, that Crysta and Zak shared, just couldn't have ended just at a drop of a hat.

Lastly, I find David Galin's final paragraph in his letter (CS #26) in *grave contempt*.

I *do not* respect a person who loves comics and denounces animation. This magazine gives us variety. They give us what's hot *and* what's not. But, at least we know what's what.

And that's more than I can say for some other title that gets *too* repetitive.

I would *not* like to know everything about *Batman* or *Spider-Man* every lovin' issue.

Yes! I *do* want to know about *Beauty & the Beast*, *Fern Gully* and so on, because they won't always be sitting around fresh and new like Bats or Spidey every month.

Animation and comics are brother and sister. You *can't* separate them!

Mark Ross
Williamsburg, VA

...This may not be the best place to bring this subject up, but since this is the only magazine that I'm currently reading I thought, "Why not?"

I was very interested when I heard that Marvel, in conjuncture with Impel, would be releasing a series of trading cards. I had really enjoyed the first two Marvel Universe series and thought that the trading cards would be a natural extension. But I had been very disappointed by their latest series, which changed format and the way they presented the info about their characters, so I wasn't going to hold my breath hoping for a return to the old method they used. As it turns out, I would have died quickly.

DC has always been evasive about the power levels of their characters, never going as far as saying so-and-so could lift X-amount, so I was able to accept their *Who's Who*. They told no more or less than they always had. But Marvel had always made a point of giving more info about their characters, to the point of coming up with "scientific" explanations for the workings of powers. Then, they give us the new and "improved" Marvel Universe, with the different format and new ways of presenting the information about their characters. I'd like to know where the real information went.

Marvel went from very detailed to very ambiguous. They tell you where to look to find origins and significant stories, but that doesn't do you a bit of good if you aren't already familiar with them and if you don't have every book Marvel has released. And what's almost as bad, they become very ambiguous when it comes to strength and speed. I don't see how they can classify a character who can lift two tons in the same category as someone who can lift 10 tons.

So, I had placed some hopes on the trading cards being less ambiguous, but those hopes didn't go through. Then, it dawned on me as to why—the look of a book (and trading cards) has become *more important* than the contents.

I don't know about anyone else, but I'm tired of the look being more important than the contents. I'm tired of paying an arm and sometimes a leg for a cover, a trading card or a hologram. And that seems to be all we're getting anymore. The stories are taking a back seat to gimmicks. That's sad.

I've written to Marvel and DC on this matter and have gotten pat replies. Marvel has said that all future Marvel Universes will look like the current one. I bet! I look for trading cards or, most likely, holograms. DC never sticks by what they say (see the return of Superboy, a Supergirl, the JSA, etc.), so I expect them to change the look as they see fit, too.

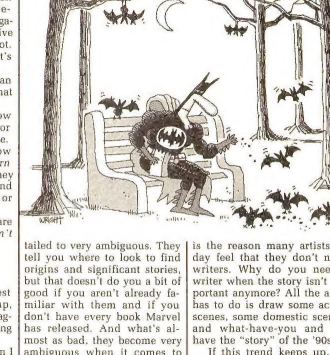
I also think that this trend is the reason many artists today feel that they don't need writers. Why do you need a writer when the story isn't important anymore? All the artist has to do is draw some action scenes, some domestic scenes, and what-have-you and you have the "story" of the '90s.

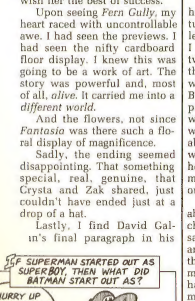
If this trend keeps up, we may one day see a comic that's covers only, with no story whatsoever. I for one don't want that. Do you?

Derrick Fannin
594 Hyden Br.
Van Lear, KY 41265

...A gracious *thank you* for printing the Mike Peters articles in CS #27. I didn't become a *Mother Goose and Grimm* fan 'til after I saw the animated show a while back when I became rather bored by the repeats on ABC, NBC and Fox. It gave me the opportunity to jump into the cartoon when I had the perfect excuse to do so.

Charlie Brill is excellent as the neurotic Grimmy on the show, along with Greg Burson as Attilla the Cat and the Wisecracking Magic Mirror. My favorite episode was when Grimmy met up with Count Dracula and Igor during a lottery contest. Mark Evanier does some pretty wacky stuff on that program with his warped sense of humor. CBS should be thankful they have an adult following for *Mother Goose & Grimm*. And *Garfield and Friends*. I have felt that cartoons were not being treated with respect by some people




S.F. SUPERMAN STARTED OUT AS SUPERBOY, THEN WHAT DID BATMAN START OUT AS?
HURRY UP WITH THOSE BATS, BOY!
YES, SIR!
(BUT YOU SAW THAT COMING A MILE AWAY, RIGHT?)
Art: Kevin Brockschmidt

who still think primetime television can still get an edge over them in intelligence. Wake up, people! You'll realize in time that animated cartoons can appeal to more than just "kids." Look at the popularity of *The Simpsons*!

Steven Acevedo
Bronx, NY

...The issue of total creative rights in the comics industry is a hard thing for most comics companies to talk about. A loss of control or finances seem prevalent in their concepts of a writer or artist gaining total creative power and ownership of the characters or series they bring to life. Marvel and DC seem to be caught in a situation that's pulling at the fundamental strings of comics making—a writer or artist creates a character, sometimes with help from an editor, and they strive to make it the hottest new item with most of the rewards of its popularity going to the company. Even ownership or creative control over said character is not allowed by the person who created it. And that's how its always been. But is it right?

Now comes along Image Comics. They offer all the top benefits that the other "Big Two" offer, as well as ownership and creative control of that character or series by the one that created it. That's a hard deal for anyone to pass up. Does Image see a reward to these tactics that the other two have overlooked? I believe so.

Image knows the value of a satisfied creator, one who feels more passionate about the work they own than anything else. They know the work they turn in is the best on the market. And those who do that writing or pencilling feel a greater reward than even money can give when they see their name printed as that character's creator.

Bob Kane does with Batman, Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster with Superman, even Bill Everett now does with Sub-Mariner. We see their names printed at the beginning of each comic stating who created that great character. And that's how it should be. Image recognizes this. It's not really such a big deal. However, Image is giving more than just creative credit to its people, but ownership as well. Is this a bad thing? Not really, if agreements are presigned properly, total ownership and creative control of new characters are given to the people involved in making them, such as Todd McFarlane and *Spawn*, while complete and exclusive publishing of said character is given to the company involved in the signed agreement. Everyone gets what they want this way. The writer or artist gets creative control, the company sells an extremely hot property and the readers get great stories.

Does anyone really think that if Marvel or DC could grant the same rights Image currently is, that McFarlane would be inclined to keep his *Spawn* under Image's roof? Or Rob Liefeld on *Youngblood*? I don't believe so. Marvel and DC offer greater distribution worldwide and better publishing and advertising. That means greater profits for the companies and the creators both. However, I feel a company like Image is long overdue. The "Big Two" are clearly not willing to grant greater creative rights. Image Comics can only be a viable step forward to greater comic making and give a new view of where it's heading, as well as give pause to other companies unwilling to grant creative control.

But let's face facts. Marvel and DC own the two largest universes in the industry today. If people believe that just because Liefeld creates a hot-selling series or McFarlane creates a wild, new character that Image can cause a major upset in the market, they are sadly mistaken. But Image *does* provide a better future.

As an aspiring writer, I only hope that along with these great, new changes Image is making, I hope they are equally making attempts to allow a greater range of raw, new talent to get into the business easier than other companies. *Not* speaking for myself, there is a great deal of talent being overlooked out there by the current ways of screening new, potential artists and especially writers. I hope this area of comics making will be addressed with equal zeal by Image.

Mark R. Daniels
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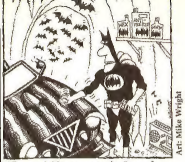
Cincinnati, OH 45215



"Curses! No sooner do I wash & wax this thing than the little guano factories make their return!"

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NIGHT LIFE

By MARC SHAPIRO

Michael Keaton faced an offer he couldn't refuse when he was given the opportunity to play Batman on the big screen. But all the money and perks in the world wouldn't have made a dent with him had director Tim Burton not paved the way with an offhand remark.

"What ultimately convinced me to do the role was when Tim said, 'You just seem like the kind of guy who would put on a Bat-suit and go out into the night,' " remembers Keaton. "I said 'OK, if you think of me like that, I'm willing to go with it."

Keaton recalls that introduction to Batman's world in Chicago, where the Windy City has gotten considerably windier because of an influx of journalists who are in town to gather the wit and wisdom of *Batman Returns*. The actor is in rare form, sounding off French rap lyrics and tossing nuts into his mouth in between responding to the neverending inquiries into the Dark Knight's second adventure. Needless to say, Keaton—who only saw *Batman Returns* for the first time the night before—is getting punchy with the press.

A detective comic no more, Michael Keaton unmasks as Batman.

"Boy! You guys have it easy," he laughs. "All you have to do is sit around, eat free food and ask questions. All I've got to do is be witty and clever and answer them."

Keaton jokes that the reason he decided to do the second film was "that they promised me the costume would be lighter, and it was. About four ounces lighter.

"I liked the story idea," he continues in a more serious vein. "I liked the idea of the two villains, and I *loved* the idea that Tim was going to do it again. Playing Batman also gave me the opportunity to portray the same character twice, which was something I had never done before."

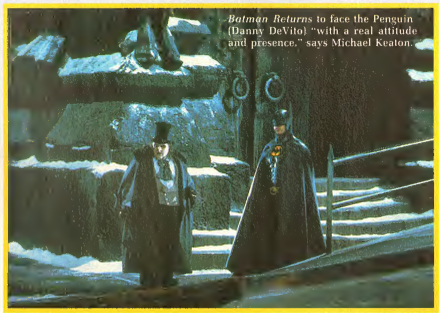
Keaton was also interested in the prospect of exploring further dimensions of the crimefighter. "In the first movie, I felt we took a real good look at a very complex character. We got inside his skin and established a definite foundation into his psyche. And while we haven't gone totally over the top with this movie, I believe we're giving audiences a deeper look and some different facets to his character.

"People have told me they think Batman is more lively and Bruce is a much darker character [in *Batman Returns*], and now that I've seen the movie, I kind of agree with both opinions. The intention on my part was to lighten Bruce and Batman up a bit, and the script presented me with the opportunity to not sulk so much. We pretty much laid down that brooding, morose thing in the first film; to have dwelled on that in this film would have been boring.

"We have that first shot of Bruce in this movie's beginning, where we get that whole thing out in the open and out of the way. It was important to establish that. But after that, we felt we were free to move the character up into other shades and emotions."

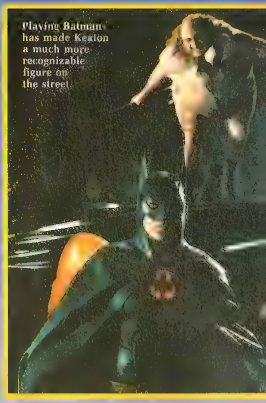
Keaton balks at the notion that playing Bruce Wayne is really the more difficult role and that *anybody* could play Batman.

"Wrong!" he exclaims. "I don't think just *anybody* could put on that mask, but I do agree that it's a little more challenging to play Bruce. I think I served my function in this film with both characters. I had a role on this team, and I did what I was supposed to do to move the story along. Sure, I did my job well, but so did everybody else, which is why I think this film works so well."



Batman Returns to face the Penguin (Danny DeVito) "with a real attitude and presence," says Michael Keaton.

Handling Selina Kyle, a.k.a. the Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer), "takes a lot of work" for Bruce Wayne and Batman (Keaton).



Playing Batman has made Keaton a much more recognizable figure on the street.

All Batman Returns Photos. Trademark & Copyright 1992 DC Comics, Inc./Courtesy Warner Bros.

The actor's memories of lensing *Batman Returns* are non-detailed. He responds with the expected statements of "Danny [DeVito] was great to work with," "Tim and the crew were the ones who really worked hard" and "Michelle [Pfeiffer] was great," but eventually gets around to more specifics.

"I liked the first Batman scene we filmed, where Batman pops the bad guy, spins him around and does the thing with the bomb. Then, I turn and face the Penguin [DeVito]. It was a tough scene to choreograph because there was so much going on, and the timing and camera angles didn't help things. But what I worked real hard on in that scene was presenting Batman as somebody with a real attitude and presence. I did it with the way he stood, the way he set his jaw and things like that."

Keaton reports that his favorite Bruce Wayne scene centered on his encounter on a Gotham City street with Selina Kyle (Pfeiffer). "It's the scene where I see her talking to herself, which is something I've always found attractive in a woman. My approach to the scene—which, to be perfectly honest, I didn't think was that well-written—ultimately turned out to be pretty stupid. I decided to work a lot of Bruce Wayne stuff into the scene. You know, things like scattered thoughts and not being really focused, but yet trying to establish some sort of connection with her.

"I jammed a whole lot of things into that scene. I even struggled to come up with that stupid little walk you see me do. I was basically attempting to paint a picture of what it's like for somebody like Bruce to go out into the real world and attempt to deal with a woman. In hindsight, I probably would have been better off just going up and talking to her, then walking away."

Reflecting on the two women in Batman's life, Vicki Vale (played in the first film by Kim Basinger) and Selina Kyle, Keaton finds a definite difference.

"Selina's nuts, Vicki's not," he chuckles. "Selina's got a head thing going and is a lot like Bruce. Vicki's not like that. She seems to be working more out of her gut. Vicki is probably the easiest of the two to be around. Being around Selina takes a lot of work. I'm constantly filling out forms for state hospitals," he roars.

Keaton thinks he and director/producer Tim Burton "relate to each other on a pretty basic and strange level."

The actor thinks it's "more challenging to play Bruce [Wayne]" than Batman.

Working with Michelle Pfeiffer on *Batman Returns* had the potential of seeing Keaton himself committed. The two were once involved romantically in pre-*Batman* real life, and the idea of creating on-screen sparks where actual sparks once existed would seem challenging. Keaton agrees.

"I had some moments of thinking, 'Boy, this is going to get strange,' or, 'The press is going to have a field day with this,' " says the candid actor, "but there's a lot of mutual respect involved between us. We know enough about each other personally that it helped us, but our knowledge wasn't enough to get in the way."

Michael Keaton has managed to avoid the creative death of stereotyping by peppering his career with such diverse roles as *Beetlejuice*, *Clean and Sober*, *The Dream Team*, *Mr. Mom* and, of course, *Batman* (which he discussed in CS #9).

"My choice of roles has been diverse by design. I've done that from the beginning, and it has just become the way I operate," he says. "I planned to make a wide variety of choices so that they couldn't say, 'The public won't accept him as anything else, so he just has to do that.' Because that worked, I was just automatically offered different things.

"That may backfire on me at some point. It may reach a point where I'm known for so many things that I may start getting passed over for roles because they want somebody who will attract a specific audience. I don't really think about that too much, but I do realize that it could happen."

Keaton "feels vindicated" at finally

(continued on page 60)

Just Say Cheese!

By PHILIP AMARA

The Cheese Heads search for enlightenment, as well as perfect coleslaw.

A Mafia widow with a nuclear device hidden in her leg? A tiny *Barney Miller* lookalike living in a car glove compartment? A government agent with the words "CIA" etched into his forehead? Hopefully, the average comics reader hasn't met many people like those who inhabit the twisted world of *The Cheese Heads*, published bi-monthly by Tragedy Strikes Press.

This series, by 20-year-old cheese wiz Nick Craine, originated as a comic strip in Craine's native Ontario, Canada.

"It began as a strip for *The Ontarion*, the University of Guelph newspaper," says Craine. "Guelph is sort of the sound of wet cement with your shoe in it. The strip was originally based on angst-ridden university students, and it has grown from that loose premise. It was a gag strip that now has a dark, morose feel.

"The phrase 'cheese head,' " adds Craine, "is considered an insult to natives of Wisconsin, the 'Cheese State.' I took it quite literally and designed three characters with cheese for brains.

Once Craine decided upon the direction for *The Cheese Heads* comic book, he reworked his three nameless title characters, whose personalities vary from contemptible to timid to asinine.

"The first one, the guy who doesn't wear any shirt, in the trench coat, is the leader. It's all going on in his head. The other two follow him," Craine says.

"And the one who walks around in his underwear and T-shirt is insecure. He's always questioning his own motives, as well as everybody else's, asking, 'Why, why?' and making sure everything jibes. At one point, the Cheese Heads get in a car chase, and he doesn't want to take the wheel because he doesn't have a driver's license and he's afraid to get pulled over.

"The third one is the only one fully dressed, the only one who could get served in a restaurant. He's a grown man with a small child's persona. He carries around this plastic duck; it's an imaginary friend thing."

Despite Craine's changes, the Cheese Heads aren't easily classified. One might call them a nightmarish Three Stooges, a contemporary, Bizarro Three Musketeers or Salvador Dali meets David Lynch in the supermarket dairy section. Whatever the description, advises Craine, *don't* call them heroes.

"In a way, they're like one big acid trip," he says. "They're misdirected and misunderstood. They don't mean to do bad things, but end up doing them anyhow. They're *not* heroes."

Due to the characters' similarity in appearance, Craine knew he would have to add features where possible, to indicate their individuality.

"The props like the plastic duck and T-shirt that reads, 'When things seem to get you down' were in the original drawings, so I've kept and developed them," notes Craine. "It's like having the Ninja Turtles with different-colored head bands. It's a challenge making three characters that look the same distinguishable."

Clues are scattered throughout the series as to the Cheese Heads' mysterious origin, but Craine says he isn't being intentionally cryptic. He's happy to surrender the secret behind their metamorphosis.

"A long time ago, they ate some bad coleslaw. Of course, it was *radioactive* coleslaw," he says matter-of-factly. "It hasn't been revealed except in bits and pieces. I haven't established who these characters were before their transformation, or whether they had jobs and families. The important thing is where they are now and the way they'll deal with future predicaments."

Photo: Michel Vrana

Nick Craine, the creative wiz behind *The Cheese Heads*, admits his comic is "very, very nuts."

The Cheese Heads aren't the only bizarros on this bus. Other colorful characters include Dr. P.R. Jones, a brilliant surgeon whose hairdo resembles a healthy artichoke; crime kingpin Carlos Mandosa; and a daydreaming, hopelessly inept spy.

"He's secret police, but it says 'CIA' on his forehead. It's some kind of irony," says Craine. "The only way he finds out about Mandosa's funeral is by seeing the news in the window of a TV store. When he arrives at the funeral home, he just sits there thinking about ice cream."

Another recurring character is garbed in a Steelers jacket and baseball cap. "He works for the National Research Council, an organization that everyone knows exists, but they don't know about the things that go on behind closed doors. The Cheese Heads will come into contact with him again."

In the premiere issue, readers are introduced to the Cheese Heads as they attempt to locate and kidnap Annette, Mandosa's widow, who happens to have a thermonuclear device in her leg. The characters believe this device will free them from their strange transformation. Then, warns Craine, "the ugly part comes in.

"They sit her down, tie her legs to a chair, use a Pez candy dispenser to hypnotize her to sleep, then take a hacksaw to one of her legs—the one *without* the nuclear device, which they put in the fridge because they think they can sell it to the cops." As the Cheese Heads continue their savage deed, they're interrupted by Dr. Jones, who has also been hot on Annette's trail since Mandosa's death.

"Jones performed the operation on Annette for Carlos. He has been tracking her with the aid of his little radiation detector. He storms through the door of the Cheese Heads' apartment in Gas Town, a fictional place near the Canadian-United States border, just as they begin to saw off her other leg. Jones pleads with them, telling them he installed a failsafe device to prevent tampering. The Cheese Heads don't buy it, shoot Jones and continue cutting.

"Of course, Jones was right. There's a clicking noise—*vuba, vuba, vuba, click*—and an explosion that pulls the panels apart on the page.

You'd never know a secret agent was trailing Annette, widow of crime kingpin Carlos Mandoza.

Annette's molecules become, well—she vaporizes. The apartment roof is blown off, and pretty much the only things left are the Cheese Heads and the television set, because television will live forever.

"With several different organizations after the Cheese Heads for one reason or another—for Jones' death, Annette's disappearance, and for their apartment being blown up—they take to the road. It's very, very nuts."

If it seems *The Cheese Heads* tread far from the path taken by most comics, it just may be due to the array of influences behind it.

"Dan Clowes' *Eightball* is a really nice piece of work," says Craine. "All the good things that can be said about it have already been said. I started reading Robert Crumb over the last two-and-a-half years in Fantagraphics' reprint books. I love *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, but I don't think I could duplicate that humor. It's so original, it can't be imitated. Bob Burden's *Flaming Carrot* [CS #2 & #21] is probably one of the first indie books I ever picked up. It was too weird to be true! Wackiness for wackiness' sake!"

As Craine began publishing his own series, he made an effort to learn more about comics history, which, he says, "was like discovering a whole new world." But it was a fellow Canadian who provided the jolt he needed to get his ideas from his head to paper.

"What really got me into doing comics in the first place," says Craine, "was *Dishman*, about a ninth-grade history teacher who has the power to clean dishes by telekinesis. He looks for crime to battle and instead finds young kids smoking and tells them what a bad habit it is. It comes off beautifully. The book is by John McLeod, who's also from Guelph. Here's a guy in my home town publishing his stuff for next to nothing. John's a real inspiration."

A forthcoming storyline will include a cameo appearance by McLeod's Dishman. "John and I get to jam!" Craine exclaims. "The Cheese Heads cover a lot of open road around

issues #5 and #6. They meet Dishman in a small city in a laundromat/pub. It's part of the plot, but it's very subtle. It's done in the same vein as Flaming Carrot's appearance in *Cerebus*."

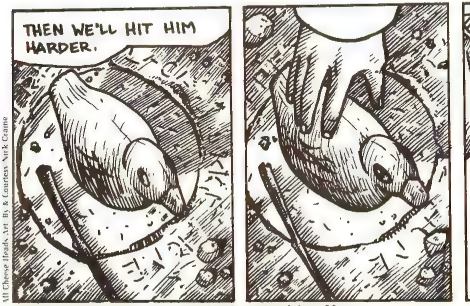
Craine's other influences include such diverse talents as Peter Bagge and John Romita Jr., but the most profound impact on his work—especially his writing—didn't come from comics.

"Jack Kerouac's *Book of Blues* really made me want to get some poetry into *The Cheese Heads*," comments Craine. " 'The Second Coming of Officer Jerry,' in issue #3, begins with a five-page prologue that introduces a new story. That piece alludes to Kerouac, to his rhythm. He finds the poetry in ordinary things like a man smoking rolled-up cigarettes or people arguing about religion. There's a lot of poetry in everyday things, as opposed to death and big melodramatic themes, like man against nature. That comes later. It's all tied to these small events and little details, like a sugar shaker and a man's yellow ashtray with a German saying on it."

As Craine unfolds his tale, he has one foot firmly planted in the cartoon universe, allowing him to blend some comic levity into what can often be disturbing storylines.

"The characters pick and choose when they want to react to things," says Craine. "In the first issue, the Cheese Head with the duck is run over by Speedy's Corndog Xpress. You see the legs flying up in the air and there's a big 'skrunch' sound effect. Then, he gets up, grabs his duck and continues walking down the highway. You could say he's indestructible, but it's really done for effect. If someone took a *Miracle Man* story, and the guy is indestructible,

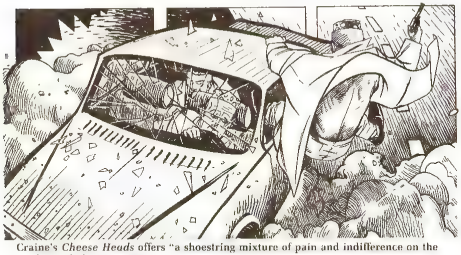
Say, anyone for some melted Cheese Heads?



Rubber duckie, you're the one. You make *Cheese Heads* lots of fun.

(c) Cheese Heads (art, ch. & f.)antors York Craine

The Cheese Heads hope Annette can give them a leg up on becoming normal again.



Craine's *Cheese Heads* offers "a shoestring mixture of pain and indifference on the road to enlightenment."

that's a big part of the plot. People can drop buildings on him for the entire issue, he would still be alive, and you would pay $2.95 for that and say, 'Wow!' With *The Cheese Heads*, it's not supposed to be important at all. It's never explained. It's comedy."

Then, there's the matter of the miniature man who lives in the Cheese Heads' car.

"They're sleeping in their car and a tapping starts coming from the glove compartment," says Craine. "The Cheese Head with the duck wakes up and opens it, and this little guy about the size of a *Six Million Dollar Man* doll comes out. He looks just like Hal Linden. He asks for Bob, the owner of the car that the Cheese Heads stole in issue #2. Then, he tags along in a half-hearted way to be a smartass."

The black gallows humor and volatile exploits are only two ingredients of this surrealistic quiche. In early issues, Craine's objectives may have seemed uncertain and the plot somewhat fluid. Surprisingly, the hunt for Annette that introduced the series was, for all intents and purposes, a red herring. According to Craine, there *is* an underlying quest energizing the characters. Amidst the weird antics, the Cheese Heads stand on the verge of a revelation.

"They're on the road to enlightenment," Craine notes. "They're trying to solve their problems, find themselves and stay alive in the process. Enlightenment is a Buddhist thing that Kerouac was totally into. Basically, they're looking to find their

(continued on page 58)

This Cheese Head learns enlightenment isn't all it's cracked up to be.

All Cheese Heads Art & Characters Copyright 1991, 1992 Nick Craine

CYBER FORCE

Marc Silvestri has the image of some very new mutants in mind.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

After years spent drawing the X Men and Wolverine, Marc Silvestri is ready to tackle some *new* mutants. This time around, he's also creating and co-writing his own superhero team, *CyberForce*, for Image Comics. Ok, these new heroes are admittedly another group of mutants, but there is a difference.

"All seven of them have been technologically enhanced," explains Silvestri. "Their natural abilities have been modified and improved through modern technology, so they're a combination of mutant abilities and cybernetic enhancement."

CyberForce will be a superhero action title, with SF elements in the background. "There will be a lot of character development in there," he notes, "with plenty of supervillains!"

Silvestri's *CyberForce* takes place in the same shared universe as *Youngblood* (CS #25), *Spawn* (CS #27), *Brigade*, *WildC.A.T.S.* and the other Image Comics titles. But the roots of the new team are actually grounded in the world of big business.

"CyberForce was originally created by an evil corporate empire called CyberData," he says. "They buy or steal young mutant children, or find parents about to give birth to a mutant. They raise these children within their corporate structure, training them to cause havoc and destruction throughout the world, and advance the evil corporation's influ-

Art: Marc Silvestri/Scott Williams

ence, especially in Third World nations. They take the natural mutant ability, and make that mutant even stronger with their technology!"

CyberForce was actually formed by CyberData to do their evil bidding. "They were developed to be the henchmen for this corporation, but these seven banded together and left CyberData to become good guys," says Silvestri. "During the four-issue mini-series, they'll be battling CyberData, among other enemies."

Seven mutants make up the core of CyberForce. "Ripclaw is the maniac. He's very aggressive and very powerful," says Silvestri. "CyberData has given him these horrendous talons which extend from his fingers, that he can turn into very destructive weapons. He's the one with the temper, and he'll be the hardest one to control, though he's an integral part of the group.

"Morgan Stryker is the most visually different of the group. On one side, he has three mechanical arms, given to him by CyberData, and on the other, he has one natural arm. He's their 'Sgt. Rock,' a no-nonsense, natural-born leader, although he's *not* the leader. He wants to cut through the red tape and get the job done!

"The character called CyBlade has energy blades that come out of her fingertips, which she can vary in length. She can also throw them if she chooses. CyberData has given her an undercoating beneath her skin to make her bulletproof, so she can withstand all small weapons fire. This material under her skin also acts as an anti-magnetic field, and she uses that power to fly.

"Velocity has super-speed, and also has interesting relationships with CyberForce and CyberData," Silvestri says. "She has a pivotal role in defining what CyberForce really is, and their connection with CyberData. She's naturally very fast, and CyberData computer-enhanced her mind, so that it works as quickly as her body. They also strengthened her skin -otherwise, if she were to hit a fly traveling at 2,000-miles per hour, it would be like a bullet to her!

"The group's big bruiser is Impact. He's about eight feet tall and has great strength. CyberData has made him fairly invulnerable by bonding his skin with their super-metal—he has a metallic body, and that technology runs through his skin and muscle, so everything is enhanced ten-fold.

"Ballistic is the female version of Morgan Stryker—they both have bad attitudes in abundance! She also has an interesting connection with CyberData and CyberForce that's one of the series' surprises. She has a mutant talent for aiming things she could make full court basketball shots every time! She starts out as one of CyberData's henchmen, which is another way we'll learn the inner workings of CyberData. She's the world's greatest assassin. She can use *any* object as a weapon. CyberData gave her infra-red, telescopic sighting and a mechanical right arm.

"The reluctant group leader is Heat Wave. His natural power is flight. CyberData gave him the ability to generate a great deal of heat, so he can melt his way through anything with a plasma beam. He's the level-headed, organized one who can keep everybody else in check."

CyberForce will be joined by other supporting characters and villains throughout the series, Silvestri notes, though the core group itself is subject to change.

"The CyberForce team doesn't have a set number, because I have so many people I want to introduce in the mini-series and the regular series. Whether they join or not remains to be seen," Silvestri notes. "There's also a mystery character that brings CyberForce together; he's the first one who leaves CyberData. He's their soul and inspiration."

Silvestri is introducing several villains in the initial mini-series, including Killjoy. "She has an interesting connection with some of the CyberForce characters. She's a combination of several other characters, and very powerful. We're also introducing Bloodshot, a generally nasty guy. CyberData keeps developing these people. They have a small army, and they just keep coming up with more."

The first mini-series involves the

Impact: CyberForce's "big bruiser."
Heat Wave: Not so hot to lead.
CyBlade: Sharp with her hands.
Ripclaw: Team maniac.
Ballistic and Morgan Stryker. Bad attitudes in abundance.
Velocity: Fleet of foot and mind.

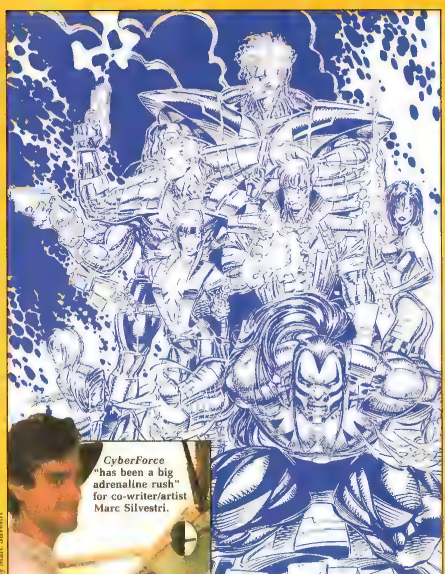
search for a powerful mutant who has potential for good or evil.

"CyberForce wants to keep him out of CyberData's hands, and vice versa," Silvestri says. "The problem is, they don't know who he is! It's a global mystery search, with some sparse clues that they must piece together. It's a race between CyberForce and CyberData to find this mutant. There are going to be many subplots and many things will be connected. Hopefully, by the last page of the last issue, everything will make sense!"

After working for Marvel for over 10 years, Silvestri says it was time to move on to a new challenge. He decided to join Image in order to do his own characters.

"I felt this was a true alternative—a chance to own my creations," he says. "That has always been important to anyone working in comics. Unfortunately, it's just not gonna happen with the high-profile comics. It's a double-edged sword. If you want to work for the big companies for the exposure and their big characters, then all you're doing is working for the company—*they* have all these great characters and you don't.

"When Pacific and some other companies folded, I was really sad. There were other companies out there, but they weren't doing the stuff that interests me. The other guys in Image and I do superheroes best—that's why we were working for Marvel. That's why guys like Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld were so successful at Marvel—they're good at it. We'll be doing superhero stuff at Image, at least in the beginning—that's what we *like* to do. And if we're doing what we like to do, it's going to be better, and the consumer's going to be happier. Maybe later, as we expand the market, there will be other things—that's the plan, anyway. We'll bring other creative people in, and come out with different titles and subject matter ourselves, but for now, we want to do heroes!"



CyberForce "has been a big adrenaline rush" for co-writer/artist Marc Silvestri.

Photo & Selected Art Courtesy Marc Silvestri

All CyberForce Characters & Art, Rv. Trademark & Copyright 1992 Marc Silvestri

According to Silvestri, "Character development is a big part of *CyberForce*."

Selected CyberForce Art Courtesy Image

Silvestri says there will be plenty of guest appearances by other Image characters in the mini-series, probably including the Youngblood and WildC.A.T.S. teams.

"Our shared universe will be *very* close. The advantage we have in being so small—basically just the seven of us—is that we can work closely together. We can keep the continuity in control. We're all very interested in each other's work. We're all going to be reading each other's books and each other's plots every month, and saying, 'What can I do with your guy this month?' We're looking forward to that, and I think the readers are really going to dig it, too," he says.

With three other superhero team books in the Image line, Silvestri says *CyberForce* should stand out due to its technological slant.

"The other books will be straighter superhero stuff and mutant abilities, but I'll have those little extra science fiction and technological aspects to bring forward," he says. "I don't want to stress the technological end—I want to stress the human factor."

Silvestri, who's co-writing the title with his brother Eric, says working without an editor to oversee the Image books has distinct advantages and drawbacks.

"Creatively, we'll all be unbound. There won't be anyone to say, 'You can't do this,' and that immediately frees the imagination.

"There can be trafficking problems," Silvestri admits, "and eventually, we probably will have someone coming in trafficking things, just to make sure no one's stepping on anyone else's toes. There's a lot of communication among ourselves, but it'll be nice when we have one person that we can answer to. They wouldn't exactly have editorial say as far as our individual contents, but they could keep continuity flowing, and also make sure our books come out when they're supposed to come out."

As excited as he is about *CyberForce*, Silvestri says he will certainly miss some aspects of working on Marvel's mutant books.

(continued on page 24)

ACTS OF RETALIATION

Reality intrudes when a teenage avenger takes injustice into his own hands.

A child—a boy—grows up completely deprived of love. Physical and mental cruelty define his life. Happiness exists as an illusion. What kind of man does this boy become? The answer to that question can be found in *The Retaliator*, a dark new mini-series created and written by Eclipse Comics' Valarie Jones. Jones, who wrote the successful *Robin Hood* mini-series (CS SPECTACULAR #5), travels down a much darker path with her newest tale.

"The Retaliator is a character that I developed as my answer to child abuse," says Jones. "Johnny's a young man who was raised in several different foster homes. He suffered both physical and sexual abuse, and finally, as a teenager, got out of it. Now he's living on the streets.

"Johnny has concluded that his purpose in life is to make other abusers suffer for the harm they're doing to children and women, people who can't do anything for themselves," she continues. Johnny's modus operandi is "to break into the New York City foster care authority offices, steal files and go straight after the abusers. When the story starts, he has already 'taken out' 12 such people."

He dispatches his prey with his hands or a knife. "And he tries to exact an equal punishment, so if it's someone who's, say, a physical abuser, he might beat them to death," says Jones.

By LYNNE STEPHENS

Johnny, for all his solitude on the New York streets, does have one individual to whom he feels he can turn for comfort and a ration of friendship—a trust grotesquely misplaced. The young man remains unaware that his nihilistic personality has been carefully nurtured by the psychologist Tannen, "who has been treating him since he was a child. He's the one who placed Johnny in all those homes," she says.

Tannen "works for the foster care authorities." A man in Tannen's position, Jones explains, will review children in the foster care system and make suggestions to each child's agent as to what kind of home situation would be best for the youngster. "They don't actually have the authority to place the child," says Jones, "but their word carries a lot of weight."

The psychologist wreaked havoc on his charge with a garden variety of mind games. "One of the tools that Tannen has used, for instance, to mold this young man into a monster, is to introduce him to philosophies in a twisted way." In Tannen's hands, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ayn Rand and Immanuel Kant become assault weapons in an offensive against Johnny's immature intellect.

"You can read Randian literature, and you can see it as a very freeing philosophy, or you can look at it as a philosophy that makes the downtrodden suffer more," she says. The philosophy can be interpreted as selfish or liberating, "depending on how you look at it. In this case, Tannen is, of course, feeding it to Johnny any way he wants. So, anything that supports the idea of black-and-white justice is what Johnny gets."

Tannen strives "to see what the ultimate product of a depraved existence would be. Would he create a serial killer? Would he create a pacifist? What *would* he create if he put somebody through utter hell?"

All Retaliator Interior Art: Tom Simmons/Gary Yap

Valarie Jones is "filtering" her own troubled past through *The Retaliator*.

Other characters in *The Retaliator* reach for less despicable goals. "There's a newsman in the story, Jerry Schiller, who's trying to crack [these murder cases]," says Jones.

Schiller, whom Jones has styled as a cross between Geraldo Rivera and Clarice Starling, will uncover the killer's identity and begin to unravel the complex rationale behind these grisly events.

"One of the reasons the newsman can get so far into the story is because his friend is a detective working on the case. So, he sees files that the press isn't normally allowed to see," Jones explains. Schiller "has been instrumental in helping with many cases, and the detective, in return for that, feeds him information."

Schiller and his detective pal provide the few bright moments *The Retaliator* possesses. "I don't think Johnny has any fun moments in his life, but the other two have a friendship. They are real people. One has a wife, the other a girl friend. They have a life. And Johnny's darkness hasn't really touched their lives. So, they have moments of levity.

"Basically," Jones adds, "what I want to bring the story down to is a triad of personalities: Schiller, the Retaliator and the psychologist. The psychologist and Johnny—I see them in an almost Frankensteinian kind of relationship. One has created the other. I see Schiller as the one who makes that knowledge available to Johnny, lets the monster know who created him, and breaks open the whole thing."

Jones bases her bleak fiction in part on the miasmic environment of the U.S. foster care system. "I worked with friends in the foster care system both in California and New York to find out, basically, if this could happen. *Could* you create this kind of person just by putting him through the system, *never mind* the psychologist? And, in fact, right now there are young people who are *exactly* like this boy."

She hastens to add that these real-life "Johnnys" aren't out committing serial murders. They're like Johnny "more in the sense that they are severely emotionally disturbed. They aren't able to function in society because of what they've suffered."

The writer blames deficiencies in the foster care system for much of these youngsters' ills: "The system is far from perfect, and it's a system that people aren't familiar with. We're starting to realize that there is abuse in the world, and we're even acting on it. But we don't realize that the very system that we're using to correct it [i.e. foster care] is just as abusive. It's really quite shocking when you look into the case studies and the difficulties that the people working within the system face when they try to help anyone. It's a tough situation."

Jones' rationale for choosing a New York locale will never endear her to staff members of the "I Love New York" campaign. "On my visits to New York, it has always seemed like a pretty hopeless place. It's a very, very dark place. Certainly, there are other cities with a high homeless population and as much of a non-income population...but when I walked New York's streets, I could see Johnny walking those streets. I grew up in San Francisco, but I can't see him there."

The Retaliator's combination of vivid locations, intense characters and hard-edged action also serve as the ingredients for other new Eclipse titles: The SF-flavored *Parts Unknown* (CS #28) and *Blood is the Harvest* (horror-action). Eclipse designed this new trio, the F/X line, to deliver all the excitement of block-buster movies through the four-color page. An accompanying "F/X and Win" game offers a new kind of comic marketing appeal.

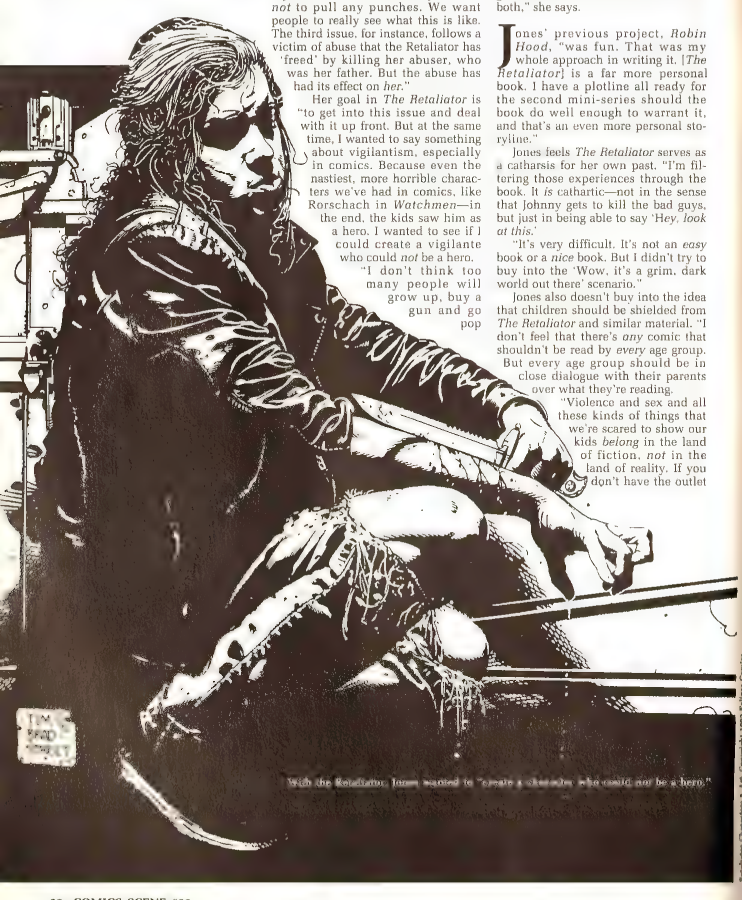
But, beyond the game cards, will the subject matter of *The Retaliator* attract the masses? Jones has no doubt

of it. "It will appeal to a wide readership. There will still be people who aren't going to want to read it. But I think there's a very wide market out there."

Jones, however, does agree that *The Retaliator* offers little sweetness and light. "It *is* a very harsh book. One of the main things I wanted to do," she says, "as a victim of abuse myself, was *not* to pull any punches. We want people to really see what this is like. The third issue, for instance, follows a victim of abuse that the Retaliator has 'freed' by killing her abuser, who was her father. But the abuse has had its effect on *her*."

Her goal in *The Retaliator* is "to get into this issue and deal with it up front. But at the same time, I wanted to say something about vigilantism, especially in comics. Because even the nastiest, more horrible characters we've had in comics, like Rorschach in *Watchmen*—in the end, the kids saw him as a hero. I wanted to see if I could create a vigilante who could *not* be a hero.

"I don't think too many people will grow up, buy a gun and go pop people because the Punisher does. But I don't think teaching that particular solution to a problem is right. It's important to see that there's no absolute good and bad in the world—there's both," she says.



With the Retaliator, Jones wanted to "create a character who could not be a hero."

Jones' previous project, *Robin Hood*, "was fun. That was my whole approach in writing it. [*The Retaliator*] is a far more personal book. I have a plotline all ready for the second mini-series should the book do well enough to warrant it, and that's an even more personal storyline."

Jones feels *The Retaliator* serves as a catharsis for her own past. "I'm filtering those experiences through the book. It *is* cathartic—not in the sense that Johnny gets to kill the bad guys, but just in being able to say 'Hey, *look at this*.'

"It's very difficult. It's not an *easy* book or a *nice* book. But I didn't try to buy into the 'Wow, it's a grim, dark world out there' scenario."

Jones also doesn't buy into the idea that children should be shielded from *The Retaliator* and similar material. "I don't feel that there's *any* comic that shouldn't be read by *every* age group. But every age group should be in close dialogue with their parents over what they're reading.

"Violence and sex and all these kinds of things that we're scared to show our kids *belong* in the land of fiction, *not* in the land of reality. If you don't have the outlet

Retaliator Characters & Art Copyright 1993 Antarctic Comics

The writer doesn't want *The Retaliator* "to pull any punches."

in fantasy, it might be more likely to be an outlet you use in reality."

Jones refers to her experience as a writer for Eclipse's *True Crime* trading cards. "I did the half that featured sociopathic criminals. Again, in my research, studying as many criminals as I have over and over again, it seems like their focus has been on reality rather than fantasy, whereas psychologists have been saying for years that a healthy fantasy life doesn't really harm you. When you lose the distinction between fantasy and reality, that's when the problem starts. And I don't think you can do that by, say, reading a comic book.

"In fact," she continues, "if anything, certain superhero comics candycoat violence. They make it seem as if it doesn't hurt anybody when they get punched across a room. I think *that's* far more dangerous than if you punched somebody and they lost some teeth, insofar as what kids believe and don't believe. Kids have a very healthy sense of what is fantasy and what is reality."

Valarie Jones hopes *The Retaliator* may have a positive social effect by showing young people that "it's not OK" for an adult to injure them. "But we don't have to get on our social soapbox every time we write something.

"The main thing people should do if they're writing or drawing something like a comic is to get their story across. And within their story, there will be social or moral messages. Writers need to get the story across as *honestly* as possible, and then those messages will come through. When you try to be a prophet, it doesn't work. But if you tell a story from your heart and soul, then your message is going to get out there."

Jones' Retaliator will "get into" the issue of abuse "and deal with it up front."

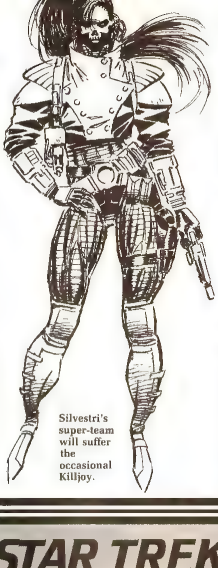
Art: Timothy Bradstreet

CyberForce

(continued from page 19)

"They have good characters," he says. "That has been good fun, and I'll miss working with many of the guys there. I've always had a good working relationship with Marvel, with people like Bob Harras, Larry Hama and Chris Claremont. That's stuff I'll miss, but this is stuff we're starting over again, anyway. Our working arrangement right off the bat is great. I'm working with Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio and Scott Williams—we're all in the same studio, and for creative energy, that's just incredible!"

His years at Marvel were very useful in sharpening his plotting and scripting skills. "I was there for almost 11 years. Some of that stuff is bound to rub off on you!" Silvestri laughs. "I'm a slow learner, but I'm not that slow! I picked up stuff from the best. I've worked with Chris Claremont for a number of years, and he's one of the best in the business. I learned a lot about character development from Chris. He's also one of the masters of strong female characterization, which there should be *more* of in this industry. That's something we're going to be working on in *CyberForce*, because we do have three strong female leads.



Silvestri's super-team will suffer the occasional Killjoy.

"[*Wolverine* writer] Larry Hama is a wonderful storyteller; he's also an artist, so he sees things cinematically. He's easy to work with. He sees things visually when he writes," Silvestri notes.

"That's one of the big advantages of writing these things myself. A writer/artist can write exactly what you see. You also write what you want to draw—you write to your strengths, so overall, it's a better finished product."

Silvestri says the biggest influences on his comic art include John Buscema, Berni Wrightson, Frank Frazetta and Neal Adams. "I'm kind of a sponge anyway—I like to look at other peoples' work and say, 'How did they do that?' My work shows many influences. I love influences!"

After more than a decade in comics, Marc Silvestri says that Image and *CyberForce* have made them more fun than ever.

"I needed an injection of something. I had been happily going along drawing comic books as a nine-to-five job, but since Image came along, there has been a big adrenaline rush for me! There are all these other things that have come into play, like ownership of characters *and* ownership of a company! It's *very* exciting. The inquiries that we've had from various people keep you on your toes, and really keep you working!"

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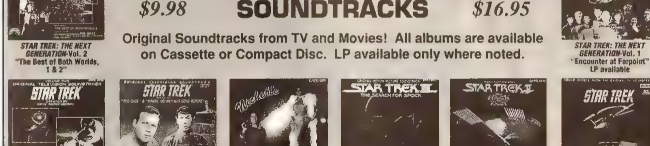

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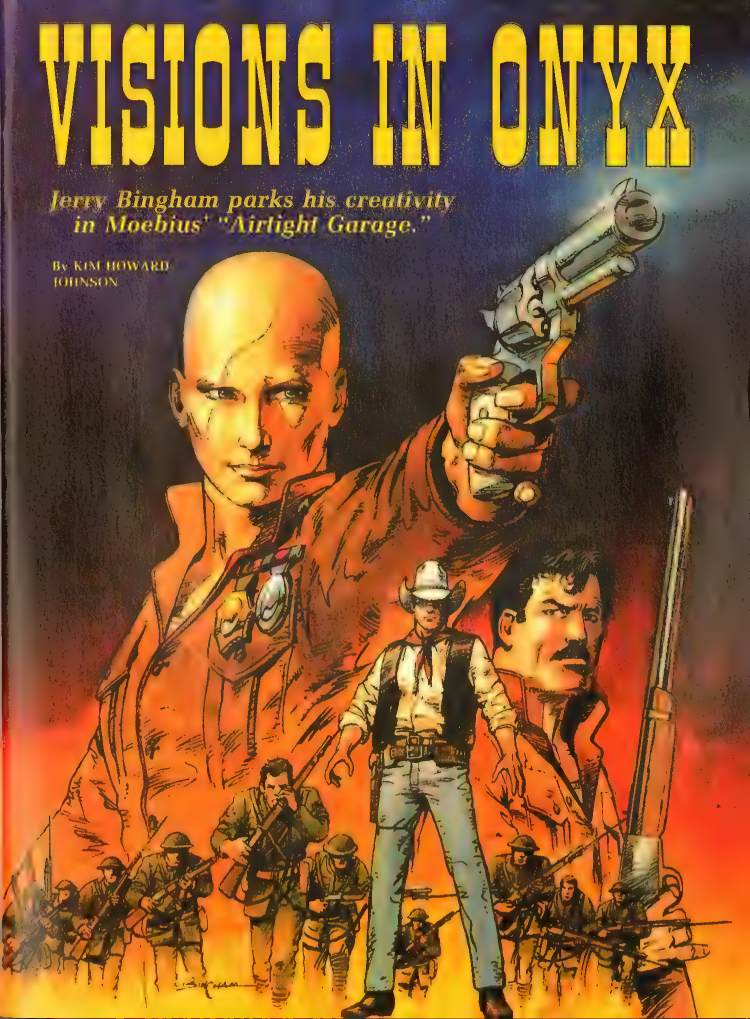
VISIONS IN ONYX

Jerry Bingham parks his creativity in Moebius' "Airtight Garage."

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON



VISIONS OF ARZACH

Thanks to the *Onyx Overlord*, artist Jerry Bingham is fulfilling a longtime ambition. He's collaborating with one of his comics heroes on the new four-issue mini-series for Epic, a spin-off from Moebius' classic *The Airtight Garage*.

Illustrated by Bingham, *Onyx Overlord* is scripted by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier (former CS contributors) from a plot by Moebius.

"It's *all* Moebius," explains Bingham. "It takes place in the Airtight Garage, and a device that sends our heroes to alternate universes. It starts out with a traditional Moebius Airtight Garage-type setting. I tried to keep the artwork—the backgrounds, the buildings, the costumes—along the vein that his readers expect.

"Then, it shifts and they go off to an alternate Earth, where everything is askew! World War I is taking place in the Southwest American desert. It's like the Civil War never ended, and they're fighting with the Mexicans.

"It's a bit of everything. There will be costumes from three or four different periods there, and Lieutenant Blueberry makes a brief appearance. It then jumps to another locale, and on and on."

The story involves Finnegar, a tough, female private eye from Armjourth (one of the largest city-states of the Garage's Second Level). "She's a woman, but she's a bit androgynous. I wanted to make her Sam Spade-ish, so I shaved her head and gave her muscles and a scar down her cheek," Bingham laughs.

Lark Dalxtrey is the other star of *Onyx Overlord*. He's the prim and proper officer from Major Grubert's ship, as seen in the original *Airtight Garage* graphic novel. "I created the look for Finnegar, and Moebius created Dalxtrey," Bingham explains. "Major Grubert is the guiding force behind it all."

The story sees Armjourth attacked by the evil Famechon Plikan, who wants to enslave the Airtight Garage. To foil his scheme, Finnegar and Dalxtrey travel first to the Randomearth, where the war is underway, and eventually venture to the planet Onyx.

Art © Moebius. Arzach © [illegible]. Used with permission.

Onyx Overlord isn't connected to 1990's *The Elsewhere Prince*, an Epic mini-series that was also an *Airtight Garage* spin-off.

"Each of these series are like vignettes that take place within the *Airtight Garage* Universe. Each story is separate unto itself. Some of the characters are Moebius characters, and they *may* be recurring," says Bingham. "But the stories aren't connected. *The Elsewhere Prince* almost had a sword-and-sorcery-type setting. This goes from science fiction to the Old West and back again!"

Their collaboration is rather straightforward. According to the artist, "Moebius gives Randy and Jean-Marc the plot. I'm not quite sure how detailed it is, because it's in French. And I've never read his version. The Lofficiers translate it and work the dialogue." Bingham reveals that he has never had to deal with Moebius directly: "Jean-Marc and Randy are almost intermediaries."

Bingham believes he has a good feel for Moebius' approach to storytelling: "I've been a Moebius fan for a long time. I've tried to keep the artwork—the backgrounds or whatever—consistent with the Moebius universe. It was difficult to keep my own style. With my earlier stuff—even *Batman: Son of the Demon*—my inking combined of a few different styles, one of which is Moebius.

"So, when I took on this job," he explains, "in trying to make things look in the Moebius vein, I had to consciously work at *not* making it look too much like his stuff. I wanted to keep my own artistic identity."

Bingham says Moebius provided him with designs for the characters from previous books, but Bingham was free to design *Onyx Overlord*'s new characters.

Will Eisner gets into the spirit of the comic.

Art: Will Eisner

The silent warrior Rest appeared in the Eternity magazine zone, another under a variety of names (Azzarel, Azzark, Azrak).

All Onyx Overlord Art: Jerry Bingham/Courtesy of Epic Comics, a division of Marvel Comics. Copyright © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

"He gave me pretty much a free hand," Bingham says. "Jean-Marc told me that the plots were very loose—they were taking me from place to place and telling me essential action along the way. Many times Jean-Marc said to me, 'Go with it. He wants to give you your artistic freedom.' I guess that's the point of these books, to continue *his* world. Because Moebius is an artist himself, he wants to give the artist creative freedom."

The chance to collaborate with one of his longtime heroes was the reason Bingham agreed to this project. "I worked on the four books for close to two years. I took it on because it was Moebius. I told them at the time, 'I can't have a deadline, I've got all this other stuff I have to do,' but they were very understanding and put up with waiting and waiting for the pages from me. But, it's something I *really* wanted to do, and I told them as long as they could wait for it, I would love to do the project.

"It was a bit of a thrill, working with these characters, and it'll be nice to see the final package," he says. "Moebius was very pleased with my work, and he congratulated me. I don't want to be stroking my ego here, but it seemed that he liked it, so that made me happy."

Bingham is a longtime Moebius fan. "I read *The Airtight Garage*, and I was a fan of *Blueberry* before I ever heard of *Airtight Garage*. I collected all of the Jean Giraud [Moebius' real name and artistic alter-ego] work in a language I couldn't even read," Bingham confesses, "just to have the artwork."

Aside from the opportunity to work with one of his idols, Bingham was attracted to *Onyx Overlord* because of the main character. "As it was originally written, Finnegar was a man, a gumshoe character. I like *film noir*, and I love Sam Spade and Raymond Chandler, but when I took the plot and read it, to avoid the cliché, I said, 'How about if I make him a woman?' They all said, 'Great; see what you can come up with.' It made the relationship with Dalxtrey a lot different—suddenly, there were undercurrents in the plot that weren't there before."

Jerry Bingham enters Moebius' worlds with Epic's mini-series *Onyx Overlord*.

Onyx Overlord provided some challenges and some pleasures, the artist says. "I had some trouble with the historical references on this one, especially with the old Western trains," he explains. "It took a bit of work, but I wanted it to be accurate. I really enjoy the SF stuff—making up characters, costumes, robots and all of that good stuff. I always like creativity more than research."

Bingham notes that the creative element is what attracted him to comics in the first place, along with action. "I'm sorry to see that many of the comics that come across my desk are a bit light on action. I really love action—all that flying, jumping and cavorting around."

In addition to Moebius, Bingham had plenty of other influences in his art. "As a kid, I was of course interested in Jack Kirby. I tried like hell to copy the pictures from the Kirby comics. And I loved Steve Ditko. Then, one day I opened an issue of *Thor* by John Buscema, and I just flipped out. I went crazy and devoured that book. I think the thing was dog-eared within a week, and I had to buy another copy. John Buscema became a big influence during my growing years, after Kirby and Ditko. Then, I discovered Neal Adams, and it was like he was one

(continued on page 66)

Artist of the Living Dead

By PETER QUINONES

A few years ago, Kelley Jones was about to quit comics. He had started as an inker at Marvel, moved up to being a penciller on a variety of books, and then wanted to take a break from the whole comics business. It was a Deadman that revived his career.

"The *Deadman* mini-series came at a point where I was going to quit comics for at least a year, if not for good," Jones recalls. "But I really liked Mike Baron's script, so I wanted to do it. And the way Mike was writing him, it didn't look like Deadman would be big and beefy. So, I thought that taking the name literally, like they did Swamp Thing, might make him much more interesting.

"And then I also thought: When he uses his powers, you don't see him, so I tried to get rid of the little glow around him because that telegraphed the punch. I got away with that. I was really intrigued by making him horrific-looking, showing him sinking into people, making it seem pretty nasty. And, good or bad, it worked. If I can make the character visually interesting, then I've done my job."

Breaking away from straight superhero comics into the realm of second-tier horror books, Jones had finally found the freedom to experiment. "Sandman was next," Jones continues. "And he was the same way. He's handled brilliantly on the writing end [by Neil Gaiman], but he can be very dull for the artist because he's always moody and pensive. So, that's why I gave him the mood cape, which is always swirling, you know, with lots of fabric. Sandman doesn't do many of the stereotypical comic book things, and you have to work to keep him visually attractive.

"You have to add a lot in the art to keep up a rhythm and a pacing. It's a very difficult book to draw. You have to make Sandman believable, and just as important, you have to make his world believable. Whether he's in it or not, it must *feel* like Sandman's world. You can't use superhero stereotypes; you have to think in terms of horror psychology."

This was an approach that Jones had been thinking about for quite a while, but never had the opportunity to try out. He took note of some trends toward horror in comics and started

Intrigued by the horrors, Kelley Jones tries to make it all believable.

All Deadman, Batman & Red Rain Characters & Art Trademark & Copyright ©1990, 1991 & 1992 DC Comics

Jones' career came to life thanks to a *Deadman* mini-series.

playing with his style. Once thinking in this fashion, he followed his natural, or rather *un*natural, bent for the weird.

"Five or six years ago, I saw no one taking horror very seriously, with the exception of Steve Bissette and John Totleben. And, at that point, they were not doing much. But I thought, this seems to be a happening market, and no one artistically is interested in it. Well, I had always wanted to do horror. Everybody else was going after mutant titles or superhero stuff, which was fine, because that's where you get the large royalties. But I always figured: If I can show proficiency at horror, there are many titles out there. There was this wealth of books to draw and no one wanting to take advantage of that. Writers have made their biggest reputations in horror, but I'm the only artist I can think of right now who is thought of in terms of those offbeat titles, which is OK, even though I'm not just a horror artist. I can do science fiction and superhero. It's just that there's a lack of artistic attention to horror."

Besides noting the trend, Jones began studying the psychological mechanics of horror. He became a student of everything from F. W. Murnau's classic vampire film *Nosferatu* to Edgar Allan Poe's twisted tales and Hammer Films, from Berni Wrightson's classic horror work to Stephen King novels, and everything in between. And Jones was applying his lessons to the less action-oriented strips on which he was now working. "With books that are more psychological, you have to think in terms of lighting and different types of storytelling, not a simple A-B-C approach, but maybe linger on a disturbing image that's symbolic of what's going on. Or use the lighting and the atmosphere to build up a feeling," Jones explains.

It wasn't until his next project that all of his developing theories started coming together. "It was on the *ALIENS: HIVE* project that I finally decided that I could use some of the things I had been thinking about. And it was connected to Deadman, which had started me thinking this way, because [editor] Barbara Kesel was behind both of these projects. When she moved over to Dark Horse, she called me. She had an *ALIENS* script written by Jerry Prosser with Matt Wagner in mind [as artist]. But Matt had other commitments. Barbara asked if I would be interested. I had to think about it, because the job was pencilling *and* inking four issues. At the time, I was finishing *Sandman* and then going on to *Batman*, so I didn't know if I could do it.

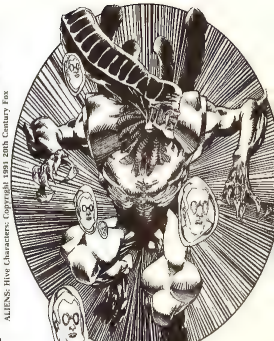
"Barbara sent me the script, and it was wonderful. It was one of those stories that five pages from the end, you don't know how it's going to turn out. That's the *best* kind of story. And it had much more going on than just monsters. It felt more like the first *ALIEN* movie, which I'd had the personal trauma of seeing in 1979. I've only watched that movie a few times—it worked too well. So, anyway, I called Barbara up and she worked out a deadline—which I was still late on.

Photo © Art Courtesy Kelley Jones

Kelley Jones doesn't know if his work has influenced other artists. "Much of my style *isn't* on the paper; it's a lot of thinking."

"But the thing that it had, the questions we were asking, were all character-motivated. It's not the Aliens that are the prevailing thing in the story, but the *people*. The Aliens just happen to live in that world. I also liked the fact that it wasn't about Ripley or anybody we knew. It was this young woman, this older man and their relationship. And that's just non-traditional comics. The other aspect was that there were these three people—well, two humans and a dog—so you knew there wasn't going to be a big body count, so you really have to develop things. It has to feel like that in any panel one of those things could pop out—even if none did. That was a big challenge to me. And that's when I realized that all those things I had been talking about, those different kinds of storytelling techniques that I had been telling editors, writers, artists, anybody who would listen—that I could do them here. I could show that you have to do these comics differently than the superhero stuff. Here, I could prove my point. Of course, it's going to be up to the readers to say if it worked."

He's now more conscious of his approach and technique, and while he has clearly evolved into his own style, he's perfectly willing to acknowledge his many influences. Berni Wrightson, for example, is considered by Jones to be one of the masters of art, and Jones fulfilled a dream by drawing *Swamp Thing* in Wrightson's style. "I had to do it. I know they *didn't* want me to do it that way, but I had to. And I think the issues were received well. But I just had to bury that ghost—do at least one Wrightson book. You can *say* what an influence he has been on you, but to *show* that influence, well, that was important."



ALIENS: Hive characters: Copyright 1992 20th Century Fox

***ALIENS: Hive* enabled the artist to further develop his "horror psychology" storytelling techniques.**

Other influences, comic book and otherwise, include artists Mike Ploog and Paul Gulacy; all the German expressionists, Caravaggio, Kokoschka, Klimt and others. Jones is also influenced by photographers, such as Joel Peter Witken, but he has been influenced mostly by film. "Oh yeah, movies. Directors like Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen—I'm always ripping them off. But my biggest ripoff is the work of Sergei Eisenstein. Also, F. W. Murnau is a huge influence."

But beyond those visual references, Jones is also a reader of the macabre. Poe, Stephen King and "especially H.P. Lovecraft. When his stuff works, no one does it better."

One other art that has influenced Jones has only recently become apparent to him—music. "I didn't realize how important music was to me while I was drawing. I had been playing more and more classical music, and one day I found a CD by Howard Hansen and remembered that his Romantic Symphony #2 was used in the first *ALIEN* movie to roll the credits over. I bought it and used it to put me in the mood to do my *ALIENS* book."

While Jones is happy to acknowledge his influences, he doesn't feel that even though he has been working in the field for a decade, he has done enough important work that other artists are noticing his style.

"I don't know if I've influenced anybody. Besides not having that big

All Art: Kelley Jones

Jones' thirst for disturbing images can be seen in an upcoming portfolio.

Illustrating Harlan Ellison's "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin" for Millennium was a project Jones couldn't refuse.

a body of work. I think much of my style isn't on the paper; it's a lot of thinking. If I were to teach comics, very little of it would be: Here's a no. 2 pencil, you need this kind of paper, etc. I'm much more concerned with how you develop your mind and your imagination. You can find a hundred better draftsmen, but very few people have the kind of imagination to really put their stamp on a work. So, I don't want someone criticizing my work by saying this is off and that's wrong. I draw from life. Sometimes in life, things are off. I'm more concerned with atmosphere and the creation of a believable world. And I do consider myself a traditional artist, just one who doesn't like to limit himself. But to do horror well, I have to work differently than when I'm doing superheroes. But, even then, with the right superhero, I can make it work."

One of last year's hits was the graphic novel, *Red Rain* (CS #21). While Jones had always wanted to do Batman, he wasn't sure he would be able to enjoy the freedom he had been granted. But a Batman/Dracula project was just too perfect a combination for him to pass up.

"Once I knew it was an Elseworlds project, then I thought I could change some of the elements I didn't like in Batman's world, such as the Batmobile. I like it small and rounded, like a 1930s racecar. Also, I like the Batcave more like a cave, with these big pillars in it. That's how I had always seen him, and I found that Doug Moench had a similar view. So, I got the script, and right away, I could see that the story was there for the Batman readers, and there were other elements that appealed to me.

To Jones, "Dark means character-motivated."

The Artist of the Living Dead promises more *Red Rain* for Batman.

"Batman is a full-grown horror character—*not* a superhero. If he has to hit anyone, he's not doing his job right. I see him as a purely intimidating character, and that's how I draw him. I thought it was just a great Elseworlds story, but *Red Rain* did have some strikes against it because it was an expensive book. I figured that I had to give people their money's worth. So, any time I had Batman doing something, I really had to kick a little ass on it."

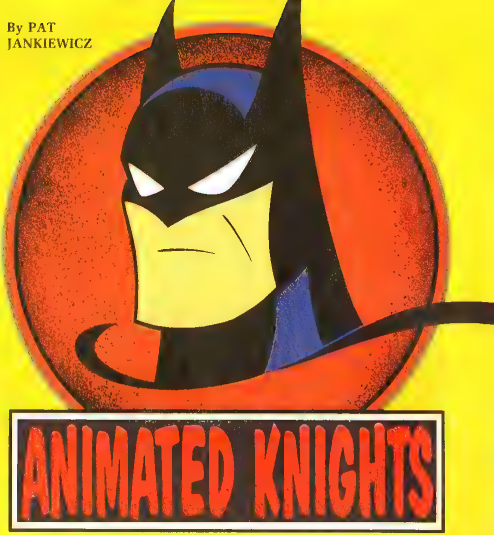
Jones isn't done with this Elseworlds Batman, but before he returns to the story of the vampire Batman, another Dark Knight project will come first. "It's another Elseworlds Batman, and it's called *Joker: The Wild*. I can't say too much about it, only that Batman is more of an elemental force and the Joker, a sorcerer. It takes place in a world where technology and magic work hand-in-hand. After that, we'll do the *Red Rain* sequel, but we're doing it so that you won't have to have read *Red Rain* to enjoy it. It just takes place in the world where Batman is a vampire and how the criminals adapt to that."

All these characters that Jones has worked on—Deadman, Sandman, Batman—would be classified as dark characters. There is a definite link: A ghost, a dream-creature, a vampire.

(continued on page 66)

ANIMATED KNIGHTS

By PAT JANKIEWICZ



Grim & avenging, Batman returns to the cartoon night.

Batman has never been lucky with his cartoon career. Past trials-by-toon have reduced the grim avenger to a pointy-eared dad playing straight man to the likes of the Wonder Twins, Bat-Mite, even Scooby-Doo.

Warner Bros. Animation is changing all that with *Batman: The Animated Series*, a captivating cartoon that mixes elements of the hit Bat-films with the comic book, from the Neal Adams '70s to the Norm Breyfogle '90s.

"This Batman is a flesh and blood human being, and you get a stronger sense of his crusade," declares Alan Burnett, the amiable producer of the series. "This is not a cardboard character. He's a man with a cause in a frazzled society. Batman is unremitting in his obsession to rid the streets of crime and save people from the pain he experienced."

Burnett's office looks like the Batcave West. Besides the usual producer bric-a-brac of files and scripts, he has a well-read copy of *The Batman Encyclopedia*, stacks of DC comics, *The Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told*, character sketches and a leering wind-up Joker.

"We show a character who's mortal," he says of the Dark Knight Detective. "One difference between our Batman and the movie Batman is our guy wears cloth clothes. Ours is much more fluid in motion. The movie Batman is interesting in his stiff, almost knight-like look. Ours harks back to the classical Batman, who's *very* vulnerable."

Nonetheless, the cartoon crimefighter is modeled after his cinematic cousin. "We're trying to stay as close to the movies as we can," says Burnett. "Visually, we'll be in tune with the movies. Our Catwoman and Penguin models are based on drawings that Tim Burton made for us. Bruce Timm designed Batman and most of the other characters, but Burton saw and approved everything we did. We had meetings with him to keep the franchise close.

"Burton is a very gracious fellow, full of ideas. He said to us, 'Do what you feel needs to be done. This is your series, this is what I'm doing, so take it from there.' We're trying to keep the show close to the movies—for example, Batman has the film's grappling gun, and Penguin is referred to as a mutant because that's what he's called in *Batman Returns*. We also wanted to stay close to the comics. The classic Batman with Dick Grayson as his partner emerges in this show and blends with the movie's tone.

"It was difficult developing

Batman: The Animated Series producer Alan Burnett says "people can't believe" Kevin Conroy is the voice behind the Dark Knight *and* Bruce Wayne.

Catwoman and Penguin without having seen *Batman Returns*. Our versions had to live on to bother Batman. We were told the story's basic bones, but had no idea how they moved or talked. Our Catwoman is more social than the movie."

Burnett, a comics fan as a kid, enjoyed researching the series. "He was my favorite comic-book hero," the producer remembers. "When I was 10, I loved the first *Batman Annual* with his origin stories; how he got his suit and car, and how the Bat-Signal was created. I went to DC last year and raided their files! In two days," he laughs, "we literally went through every *Batman* and *Detective* comic, starting with the late '40s to today.

"Around 1957-'58, I started recognizing comics I had bought! It was amazing to see and hold those covers again. It's strange that now, 30-odd years later, I'm producing Batman shows for a new generation of kids. It's ironic to me. The project feels special because of that."

Burnett, who also wrote *Duck Tales: The Movie* and won a Humanitas Award for *The Smurfs*, was summoned by Warners' Bat-Signal. "I had just story-edited the second season of Hanna-Barbera's *Dark Water* when Jean MacCurdy called up saying, 'You've got to come over to *Batman*!'

"She showed me a promo clip by co-producers Bruce Timm and Eric Radomski, and I couldn't believe my eyes," he states. "It was the *best* action/adventure animation I'd had ever seen for television. That promo clip got me here, and I've been jazzed about the show ever since."

He and the other producers have a strong rapport. "Radomski and Timm are good guys who are very dedicated to the show. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for them. Radomski and I are both from Cleveland and Timm's from Ohio. That state's a real hotbed for superhero creativity," he jokes. "[Superman creators] Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster and Howard the Duck are also from there!"

The animated *Batman*, which will air weekday afternoons on Fox this fall, has a *noir* ambience. It seems as if characters from Max & Dave Fleischer's Superman cartoons are wandering through *Akira*'s Neo-Tokyo. "We call the look of the show 'Dark Deco.' Dark Deco is as if there were computer technology in the '40s. The show takes place at night with Batman unseen until he literally steps out of the shadows. With this look, even his cape has a heaviness to it."

Characters move appropriately—with Bruce Wayne's slouchy millionaire gait and the Dark Knight's lithe motion. "*Batman* wouldn't work if the acting wasn't as well-animated as it is," the producer muses. "I see similarities to Fleischer's *Supermans*, but our look is softer and more, to use a phrase—cartoony. Those cartoons also had a dark palette, so Fleischer has been an influence on our artists. *Batman* has the darkest palette I've ever seen for TV animation."

The show, which features some of Danny Elfman's music themes as well as original music by Shirley Walker adheres to *Batman*'s grim tone. "I'm very proud of my story editors," enthuses Burnett. "We've done stories with a lot of depth. We have one ['I am the Night'] where Jim Gordon gets shot. Batman feels responsible, so he throws in the cowl and quits. We have a show called 'It's Never Too Late' about the redemption of a Mafia king. It's strange, because it touches on religious faith—the Mafioso's brother is a priest.

Despite Batman's return to his old outfit, Burnett promises that "visually, we'll be in tune with the movies."

Mark Hamill as the Joker: a tarred-and-feathered role as the most hated of villains.

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"There are so many good episodes. In 'Perchance to Dream,' Batman wakes up to discover that not only is there no longer a Batcave, but his parents are still alive. They're 20 years older and living in the mansion. He concludes that he dreamt this Batman thing up, and he's now coming out of it," Burnett relates. "I like it because it's *not* a dream—we don't fake people out!

" 'The Man Who Killed Batman' is about a low-level shmuck in the gangster organization who everybody thinks killed Batman. Suddenly, he's king of the mountain, but it becomes a nightmare, as the Joker tries to kill him for killing Batman. In 'What is Reality?', the Riddler traps Batman in a virtual-reality computer game. Some shows are lighter than others. We're doing one where Penguin enters high society, and it has some screwball scenes. The nice aspect of doing 65 episodes is that we can experiment more and try different ideas."

Batman's flight from comics to cartoon incurred "lots of problems, because comics can get away with many things we *can't*," he says. "For instance, we can't murder people like in comics. We have a certain quota of blood we can use, while comics can bathe in the stuff! It's a problem, because we wanted to find comics stories we could translate to the screen.

"Many of the comic-book stories were based on violent injuries or murders, and if we couldn't find a parallel event to substitute, we couldn't use the story. It was disappointing, because there were great comics stories that we otherwise would have used.

"This is not a cardboard character," says Burnett of Batman. "He's a man with a cause in a frazzled society."

"As it is, we've used several, including 'Moon of the Wolf' [a Neal Adams werewolf classic], 'The Cape and Cowl Conspiracy,' and right now, [*Batman* comics editor] Denny O'Neil is writing a Ra's Al Ghul show based on his stories. It's pronounced 'Raysh all-Ghoul,' " says Burnett.

Some classic tales were condensed. "We took two stories and slapped them together," he explains. "We took Steve Englehart's 'The Laughing Fish,' where Joker is killing bureaucrats, but in our version, he's putting them into catatonic states. We used the body of that and the ending of a Denny O'Neil story ["Joker's 5-Way Revenge"], where Batman fights a shark, because the story has a fish motif. Denny adapted it.

"When I came on, I started tracking down comic book writers as fast as I could, particularly people who had written *Batman*. Marty Pasko and Michael Reaves, our story editors, and [writers] Denny O'Neil, Gerry Conway and Elliot Maggin all wrote Batman comics. Many of the original writers adapted their Batman stories. Eric Radomski and Paul Dini know the character pretty well, too. I gathered people who love Batman and they've taken the show places I couldn't have gone withcut them. The producers, directors and writers are all doing the best we can!"

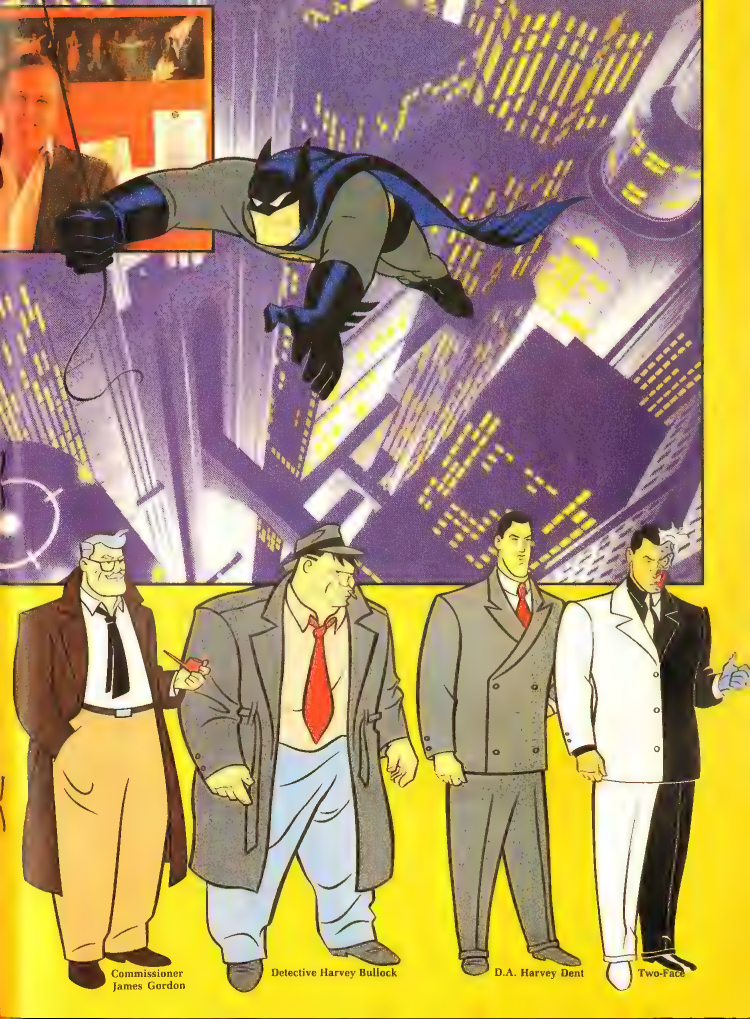
Certain to be of interest is the slate of celebrity guest villains: "Our casting director, Andrea Romano, is wonderful—she has gotten us all these high-caliber people. We recently got David Warner to be Ra's Al Ghul," he notes proudly "Helen [*Supergirl*] Slater's his daughter, Talia!"

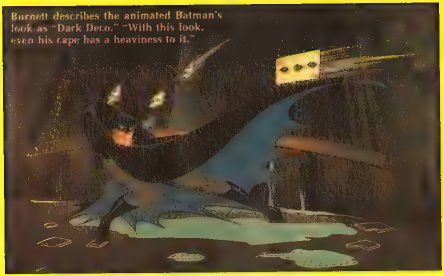
He's very pleased with the rest of the rogues' gallery. "Mark Hamill is the Joker, Michael York's Count Vertigo, Adrienne Barbeau is Catwoman, Brock Peters is [Bruce Wayne's VP] Lucius Fox, Marc Singer's Man-Bat and Meredith McRae is Francine Langstrom and She-Bat. Roddy McDowall's the Mad Hatter and Paul Williams is the Penguin.

"Michael Ansara is Mr. Freeze, John Glover is the Riddler, Harry Hamlin's a werewolf, Treat Williams is Professor Milo and *L.A. Law*'s Alan Rachins is Clock King. We treat it like a radio play, and have the actors do it as straight as they can," he notes. "They always have a good time."

Mark Hamill's role as the Clown Prince of Crime seems odd, as early word said the part had gone to Tim Curry. "We decided to go in a different direction on the Joker's voice," Burnett explains. "So, we recast. It was a hard decision to make, because we really like Tim Curry as an actor.

Burnett not only helped assemble Batman's animated friends-foes on the wall for the series...
...He even appears in an episode as "The Joker's Favor" as Charlie Collins, a [illegible] voiced by Ed Asley Jr.
Photo: Pat Izeksenior


Commissioner James Gordon
Detective Harvey Bullock
D.A. Harvey Dent
Two-Face



but Mark Hamill filled the bill."

Burnett has nothing but praise for the Batman's voice. "Kevin Conroy is terrific. He does an interesting thing with his voice: As Batman, he has an almost harsh, Clint Eastwood resonance, but as Bruce Wayne, his register goes up like an aloof playboy," the producer states. "People can't believe it's the same guy doing the voices."

Among the other regulars, Commissioner Gordon is Bob Hastings, known as Joe Flynn's second banana on *McHale's Navy*. Lloyd Bochner is weak-willed Mayor Hill, "not the strongest leader you've ever seen," and Robert Constanzo is Detective Bullock. Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. voices Alfred. Other non-baddie guest voices include Robby Benson, Ed Asner, Dick Gautier, Bud Cort and John Rhys-Davies.

As for villains, "We'll also have Killer Croc, the Scarecrow, Hugo Strange and crime boss Rupert Thorne [voiced by *Animal House*'s John Vernon], our mock-Kingpin who has appeared in several episodes. The joke around the office is that we have everybody but Killer Moth (a lame '50s Bat-villain]," Burnett laughs. "Well, we just haven't come up with a story for him yet!

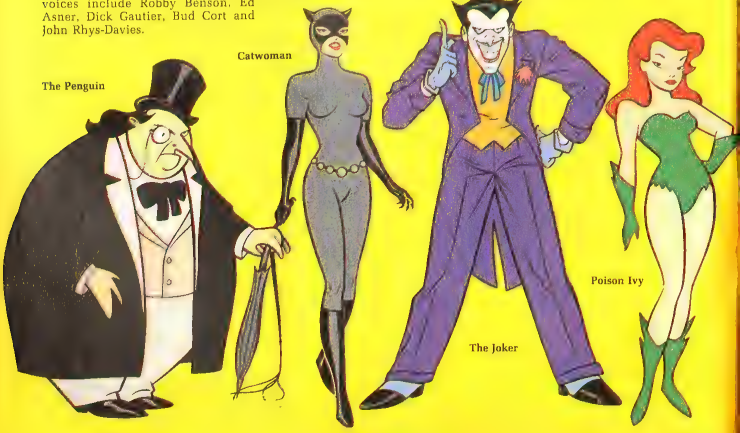
"Ron Perlman's great as Clayface. We do several with him—our Clayface outmorphs *Terminator 2*! We have a great origin and then we do 'Mudslide,' where Clayface is disintegrating and must be put into an exo-skeleton. It's the third stage of his evolution. I wrote that story, of Clayface trying to save his own life.

"Our Clayface is the Matt Hagen ['50s] Clayface, but we included elements from the others. Clayface is an actor used by the mob to set people up. The mob gave him a cream that allows him to change his face's shape. He becomes a problem to the mob, so they stuff the cream down his throat. [A violent act they got on the air by using "a lot of shadows!"] He ODs on it and his body turns to clay."

The series will also introduce new faces: "We've given Joker a girl friend named Harley Quinn. We have a reporter named Summer Gleason, our all-purpose press character, and Officer Montoya, a strong, Hispanic female character. And there's the Ninja, a brand new creation. We have a story where the Ninja comes to Gotham with a vendetta against Bruce

"In the sequel, Bruce Wayne goes to Japan to fight the Ninja. Batman's summoned there by the man who taught him martial arts. The Ninja has captured one of his students. In that episode, we actually used English subtitles! It was interesting to record that one," he grins.

Batman's car, in the pilot, resembles a rolling shoebox. That design will change. "Paul [*Terminator*] Winfield builds the Batmobile," he reveals. "He's at a company that's putting out defective cars. He's a whistleblower Batman saves, and *Batman* tells him, 'I need a car!' We were going to have Batman driving a '40s roadster until he got the Batmobile."



The show will occasionally feature both Batman *and* Robin. "For the longest time, Warner Bros. wasn't sure if Robin would be in *Batman Returns*, so we waited. When they finally cut Robin from the movie, we went with Dick Grayson, the one with whom most people are familiar.

"In the series, Robin's 18 years old and goes to Gotham State University, so when we want him in a story, we can bring him in and if we don't, he's 'away at college,'" laughs Burnett. "He's in a third of the stories. We gave Dick Grayson the current [Neal Adams-designed] Robin uniform.

"We're developing a Batgirl story," notes Burnett. "Melissa Gilbert-Brinkman will be Barbara Gordon. We've already introduced her in the show. Like Robin, she's a college student. We haven't done any stories between Robin and Batgirl yet, but the one we're doing has them at odds."

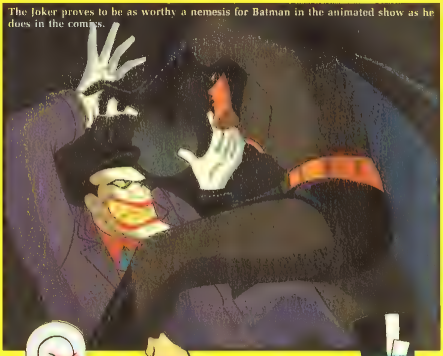
Batman's faithful butler Alfred will play a major role. "We want to have some moments of lightness and Alfred helps provide that for us," Burnett states. "Next to Batman, Alfred's in the most episodes. He really plays an important part: He's the surrogate father, the one who comments on what the audience is thinking, and he has a wry view of things that's quite amusing.

"Sometimes he sounds a bit like John Gielgud in *Arthur*, as he's aloof and above it all, with a jaundiced view of things. Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. can turn a phrase so nicely, that you smile listening to comments he makes as Alfred."

Sharp-eared viewers will notice a new Alfred midway through the series. "Efrem is Alfred now, but the first few episodes were done by British actor Clive Revill. He got another job and had to leave, but did such a nice job that we didn't feel compelled to [re dub him]."

Familiar Gotham landmarks like Crime Alley and Arkham Asylum will dot the animated landscape. "We're trying to be faithful!" the producer exclaims. "'Appointment in Crime Alley' explains Leslie Thompkins [Diana Muldaur]. Batman goes to lay roses on the spot where his parents were murdered. Dr. Thompkins [who comforted him after the murders] goes with him every year. That was written by Gerry Conway, based on an O'Neil story.

"We have Arkham Asylum on Gotham City's outskirts," Burnett reveals. "It's where psychotic members of Batman's rogues' gallery go. One show begins in Arkham. A doctor goes to a cell door and the inmate says, 'You must listen to me. You've



The Joker proves to be as worthy a nemesis for Batman in the animated show as he does in the comics.

got to get me out of here!' and it's Batman in a straitjacket! That comes from Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens, who write science fiction."

Batman will occasionally have brave and bold guests on his missions. "We're trying to develop a story right now with the Creeper," Burnett reveals. "We figure it'll look flashy to have a yellow guy jumping around this Dark Deco City. This morning, we recorded a show starring Zatanna, the magician. Zatanna is Julie [*Earth Girls Are Easy*] Brown, and Vincent [*Batman Returns*] Schiavelli is Zatarra, her father."

Unfortunately for the bad guys, "Batman is unremitting in his obsession to rid the streets of crime," warns Burnett.

Burnett, a Cleveland-born USC-grad, began as an NBC intern for Margaret Loesch, then-director of NBC Children's Programming, and her manager, Jean MacCurdy. "Now, Loesch is President of Fox Children's Programming, and Jean MacCurdy is my boss here at Warner Bros.," he happily informs. "Both of these women I worked for 15 years ago I'm working for again."

The producer has experience at several studios. "At Hanna-Barbera, I worked as a staff writer. I did *Jonny Quest*, *Super Powers* and *Super Friends*, and I story-edited *The Smurfs*." He also worked on Martin Short's *The Incredibly Mental Adventures of Ed Grimley* and wrote for Disney's *DuckTales*.

On *Batman*, his tasks include "writing, supervising and rewriting. I try to help pull the elements together. I even became a Toon on the show," he says incredulously.

The Batmobile gets an animated look.

Burnett's cartoon self is "a poor shmuck" voiced by Ed Begley Jr. in "The Joker's Favor." "He gets in the Joker's way on the road and thinks he'll be killed, but Joker says, 'I'll spare you if you do me a favor one day.' The guy says, 'Anything!' Joker says, 'OK, I'll call you when I'm ready!' We cut to the words 'Two years later.' The guy moved out of Gotham, got a new name and has done everything he can to hide. The Joker calls anyway.

"I'm tormented for 20 minutes by the Joker," Burnett chuckles. "I got a big kick out of it. It was amazing how close my [cartoon version] is. After seeing it, I told the other producers, 'Boy, do I have to lose some weight!' "

Besides producing and writing, Burnett will also bring Two-Face to the screen, altering his origin (in lieu of thrown acid, D.A. Harvey Dent is disfigured by a bullet-stricken acid tank), but keeping his scarred visage and bad attitude.

"Two-Face was the first guy I wanted to work on," explains Burnett. "He's so volatile and unpredictable, you can think about him for a long time. You wonder how he flips from one side to another. There's a line I really love where Batman wonders what Two-Face dreams.

"I'm proud of that show because it's the first time that anyone in animation has dealt with a multiple personality. We're doing a different take on the story and because it's Two-Face, we made it a two-parter!

"I was interested in showing his [schizophrenia]. Two-Face makes sense if we understand he was a multiple personality first, and then became Two-Face. His back history [as a guilt-tormented child] came from an example a psychiatrist gave me of the way a split personality can begin. I wrote the story. The script's by staff writer Randy Rogel.

"Harvey Dent is Richard [*Night Court*] Moll. He has one of the scariest voices in animation. When he first spoke as Two-Face at our recording session, a hush fell over the other actors because it sounded so demonic.

"Two-Face is a tragic horror story of a man losing his soul. Like 'Two-Face,' the 'Mr. Freeze' episode is very sad. For some reason, the sadder the stories, the more I like them. There's a lot of tragedy with Batman.

"I'll tell you something I learned about Batman," Burnett says in a conspiratorial tone. "I always thought he was popular because he was a self-made superhero, but doing this show, I learned what *really* elevates him to the Hamlet of superheroes is his parents' murders. That's where it all stems from. Every move he makes harks back to that moment, and it's the reason why my staff and I can talk about him for hours.

"Early renditions of their murders in the comics show that he's not sobbing over the bodies, he's glaring at the killer so hard that the killer backs off and runs away. The horror is that his father is trying to get to the killer. It's as if the rest of Bruce Wayne's life is finishing that action."

In his 50-year history, Batman's origin has only been told twice outside the comic. Once in 1989's *Batman* and earlier, in a special 1985 episode of *Super Friends*. In "The Fear," (which Burnett wrote), Batman relives his parents' murders. "To this day, I'm not sure how I got that on the air," he admits.

"It was written as a pilot for a Batman series, *not* as part of *Super Friends*. I went to DC to discuss story ideas, and Paul Levitz said, 'What if the Scarecrow discovered Batman is afraid of Crime Alley?' I thought, 'Wow! That's an interesting idea.' There's no way to tell that story unless you tell about the murders, so

(continued on page 60)

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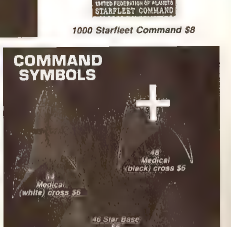

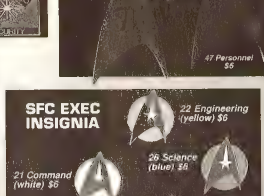

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SECRETS OF SHADOWHAWK™

With his mysterious vigilante, Jim Valentino questions the nature of heroes.

By CRAIG W. CHRISSINGER

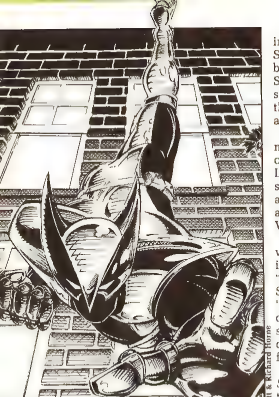
There's a new, dark vigilante on New York City's streets, and he has a different attitude about crime. He would rather cripple a criminal than kill him outright or turn him over to the police. His name is Shadowhawk and he wants to "take back the night" from those who prey on the innocent. Only creator Jim Valentino knows who Shadowhawk really is, and he isn't saying.

"I *can't* tell you that," Valentino declares. "Part of the book's underlying theme is just who Shadowhawk is. The readers will *not* be privy to his secret identity and we're not going to reveal it. Just how hard is it to keep a secret identity? That's what it's about. Hopefully, we can maintain the mystery for quite a while."

Another mystery that won't be revealed is the character's origin. "Based on the nature of not knowing who he is," Valentino explains, "we're certainly *not* going to tell you from whence he came. *Shadowhawk* is written in the third person, so we're never really privy to his thoughts. We get a sense from the narrative that this guy is pretty much fed up. When and how he has come to this point have to remain unclear in order to maintain the mystery. So, the first time we see him, he's fully dressed—in a suit of armor. We have no idea where he's from."

Valentino is more forthcoming with the general premise of Image Comics' newest four-issue mini-series: "Shadowhawk is the mystery-man concept taken to its ultimate extreme. He comes out of the shadows and doesn't let anyone see him unless he's after that person. He believes that killing a criminal lets him off the hook too easily. Instead, he breaks their spines and paralyzes them for the rest of their lives. He's the darkest hero I've seen."

More than just a dark hero, Shadowhawk is also a wanted man and a total outcast due to his actions. "They're all after him," the writer states. "When the story opens, it has been going on for weeks. The cops are after him while trying to keep it all hushed up. The underworld is after him because he keeps getting in the way. And the superheroes will start after him since he's running around the city paralyzing people. That isn't good social behavior, after all."



If you see the fearful Shadowhawk, "you're in trouble," Valentino warns.

The juxtaposition of Shadowhawk as *both* good and bad offers Valentino some intriguing prospects. "Is Shadowhawk a superhero? He doesn't see himself as such and in my estimation, he's really not. But he doesn't fight cops or break into people's homes, and he would try not to hurt an innocent bystander. Superheroes have come to a point where the lines are blurred. What is a hero and what is a villain? I'm looking to pose questions rather than give answers. That's the series' basic thrust."

Initially, the four-part series will focus on the differences between good and evil through the introduction of a character called Arson. "As his name implies, he commits arsons for hire and he sees himself as cleaning up the place," says Valentino. "He's a very twisted character, but he doesn't see himself as being much different than Shadowhawk. You'll also meet Blakjak, who *is* blurring the line. Shadowhawk is only going after bad guys, whereas Arson and Blakjak don't care. Now, is *that* the dividing line between hero and villain? I'm not sure. I don't think there are any solid answers.

"At any rate, what I want to do is introduce many of the elements of Shadowhawk's world. The story arc basically concerns itself with Shadowhawk and Arson. These two should come to some sort of cap to their conflict, but not necessarily in answer to the underlying questions."

Even before his own series premieres this month, Shadowhawk came to light, appearing in Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* #3. "That's a short story called 'Prelude,' and it again will give the readers some clues as to what this guy is about," Valentino hints.

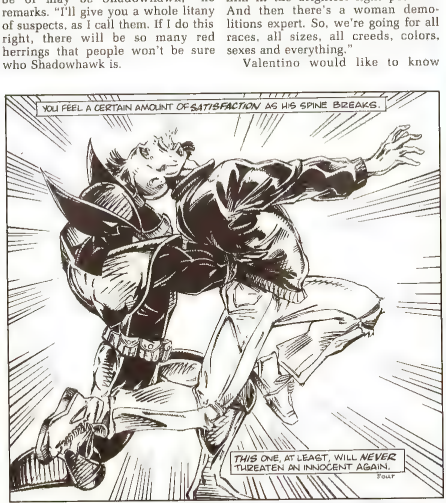
There will be other crossovers as well. "Spawn pops up in the second issue for a few pages," he reveals. "They scope each other out and Shadowhawk sums Spawn up as an 'OK guy for somebody wearing a cape.' He doesn't care much for superheroes. There's a major crossover with the Dragon planned for issue #4."

The cast of characters for *Shadowhawk* is diverse. Any one of them could be Shadowhawk's true identity. "I'm going to introduce about 12 different people throughout the series, *all* of whom have a reason to be or may be Shadowhawk," he remarks. "I'll give you a whole litany of suspects, as I call them. If I do this right, there will be so many red herrings that people won't be sure who Shadowhawk is.

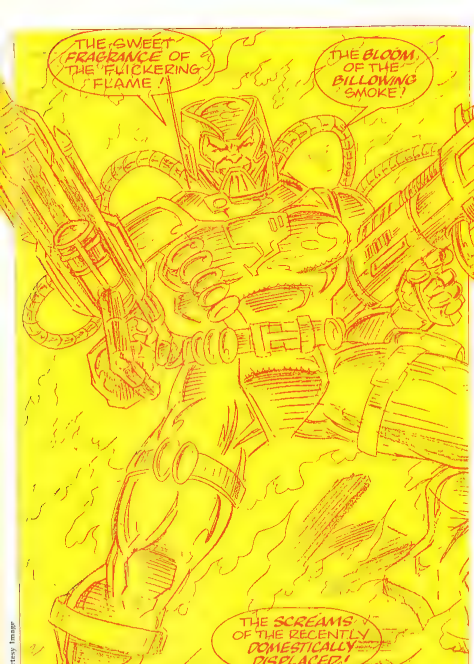
"Lieutenant Lou Jacks is one of our major suspects. He's very rich. His parents were killed in front of him when he was a young boy. That's his basis for being a cop. Sound familiar? There's also Hojo, who was a stock broker until he got a little too happy with the ol' pipe and now he's a street hustler. He's the least likely person to be someone like Shadowhawk, which might mean he actually is. There's Paul Johnson, district attorney until he got to the point where he just couldn't deal with the criminal justice system anymore. The system was falling apart as far as he could see. There's also Captain Frakes, a black guy who's trying to derail Jacks' investigation. He's not a prime suspect because he's sort of overweight, but you never know.

"We'll introduce Carlton Sum, a weapons freak. He's a survivalist type and could be Shadowhawk for all we know. There's also a female ex-cop named Barbara Gray, who got kicked off the police force for breaking people's bones. So, she's a suspect, too. We have a TV reporter named Jamie Anthonette, who's trying to break the story. Philosophically, she's in favor of Shadowhawk and is trying to paint him in the brightest light possible. And then there's a woman demolitions expert. So, we're going for all races, all sizes, all creeds, colors, sexes and everything."

Valentino would like to know


YOU FEEL A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SATISFACTION AS HIS SPINE BREAKS.
THIS ONE, AT LEAST, WILL NEVER THREATEN AN INNOCENT AGAIN.
FOUT
All Shadowhawk Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1992 Jim Valentino

Don't expect Jim Valentino's Shadowhawk to let criminals off the hook without making a few adjustments.


THE SWEET FRAGRANCE OF THE FLICKERING FLAME!
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ALL ARE LIKE MUSIC TO THE EARS OF
ARSON!

All Shadowhawk Art: Jon Valentino/Courtesy Image

Questions about good and evil heat up when Arson appears in *Shadowhawk*.

whether readers can solve the mystery. He's considering offering a bit of motivation. "What I would like to do is run a contest in the book," he announces. "If you can figure out Shadowhawk's identity and tell me the clues you used to come to that conclusion—not just guess it, but come to a *logical* conclusion—then I'll give you a page of original art. And I would ask you *not* to reveal it to everyone else. It would be cool to have something like that because I don't think it has ever been done."

One thing that is clear about Shadowhawk is his inception and subsequent history. The writer/artist conceived the character a few years ago when Archie Comics announced a planned darker version of its universe and heroes. "Several of the characters had already been commissioned, so I asked, 'What about the Fox?' The Fox was, more or less, a third-string Batman, and I thought about what makes Batman work for me and what *doesn't* work. To me, the things that don't work are the souped-up car and the weapons, the kid partner, memberships in various super groups, Batgirl, Bat-Mite and all those stupid things. It doesn't work for me that he has a good relationship with the police and that they have a signal or red phone to call him.

"If he's going to scare criminals, he has to be a shadow. He's there, and then he's gone. If you see him, you're in trouble. No one can know who he is or where he came from. The key element *must* be fear."

When that new Archie line fell through, Valentino's ideas for the Fox were filed away, and he soon began working on Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* (which he discussed in CS #13). Again, he tried to show a gloomier side to things. "In the course of the storyline, I made Starhawk into a darker character," he comments. "I was even going to change his name to Shadowhawk, but they didn't like the idea, since the original name was so established. Instead, they suggested that I take the idea and run with it. So, I looked again at the Fox proposal and put it together with the Shadowhawk name."

In fact, he pitched the concept to Marvel. The proposal sat on an editor's desk for several months. In the meantime, Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld and Erik Larsen recruited artists to form Image Comics. When Valentino was invited to join, he decided to take Shadowhawk with him.

As with the others, Valentino sees Image Comics as a chance to own his character and have creative control. "I've always believed that the creator should own his own creations instead of a corporation [owning them],"

Just who is Shadowhawk? Only his creator knows for sure.

Valentino says. "When a corporation owns your character, they have the right to pull images out of a comic that you've drawn and make T-shirts, pins, trading cards and whatever without paying you a dime or even giving you a free copy of those items. If there's a T-shirt made and you want one, you have to *buy* one? There's something wrong with that. Also, the creative team should pretty much be the ones calling the shots. That includes who you're going to work with and who you're not. I think you deserve a little bit of say in your book. With Image, it's not so much that we're working for the company—at least the initial seven of us—it's that we *are* the company. That's the major difference.

"Hopefully, Image is a first step in a direction to end comics' plantation mentality. I don't want that to sound as rotten as it probably does, because Marvel was very good to me and I'm very appreciative of many people there. Marvel and DC can be great places to work, but they both can be made a lot better."

One problem the former Marvel worker sees with the major companies is the number of editors "whose egos have gotten in the way or who've acted in a very unprofessional manner," he states. "Obviously, it's *not* all editors. If it was just someone like Todd McFarlane or Rob Liefeld complaining, you might just say they were ungrateful. But that doesn't wash when you think of Alan Moore, Frank Miller, Chris Claremont, John Byrne or *all* these other people who've had the same complaint for 10 years. There *has* to be something there. It *can't* be written off."

That's not to say Shadowhawk's creator doesn't see a need for editors. For Valentino, the crucial difference is whether the editor is a good one or a bad one. "Good editors can be extremely beneficial and invaluable in the things they can give you. You need them as a good sounding board to bounce ideas off since they bring in a whole new perspective. A good editor should be a good people manager and try to help the creative team. He should understand that different people react to different things. A bad editor will just get in your way. He will deride your accomplishments and try to undermine your confidence in yourself and the project. Unfortunately, there's a lot of that going around. Most current policies state that the editor is *always* right, no matter what he has done."

The California resident also disagrees with the notion, expressed by another Image creator, that an artist will give less of himself or hold back ideas from a project owned by a corporation rather than one where he has complete creative control. "I don't think that's necessarily true at all," he says. "I don't believe that I'm capable of giving anything less than everything I've got. I just can't do it and I know several people who are the same way. If that were the case, I wouldn't have created all the characters I did for *Guardians of the Galaxy*—and I created a whole legion

(continued on page 58)

Shadowhawk "is the darkest hero" the writer/artist has ever seen.

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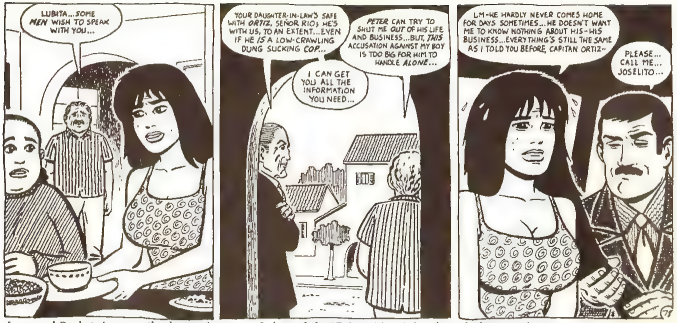
COMICS FOR REAL PEOPLE

"Love and Rockets" celebrates a decade of creativity as the vision of Los Bros. Hernandez continues to grow.

By HARLEY JESSUP

Jaime's world is the Los Angeles barrio called Hoppers.

Gilbert's world is a town named Palomar.


LUBITA...SOME MEN WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU...
YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S SAFE WITH ORTIZ, SENOR ROY. HE'S WITH US, TO AN EXTENT...EVEN IF HE IS A LOW-CRAWLING DUNG SUCKING COP...
PETER CAN TRY TO SHUT ME OUT OF HIS LIFE AND BUSINESS...BUT THIS ACCUSATION AGAINST MY BOY IS TOO BIG FOR HIM TO HANDLE ALONE...
I CAN GET YOU ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED...
THE
I-M-HE HARDLY NEVER COMES HOME FOR DAYS SOMETIMES...HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIS-HIS BUSINESS...EVERYTHING'S STILL THE SAME AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, CAPTAIN ORTIZ...
PLEASE... CALL ME... JOSELITO...

Love and Rockets is currently showcasing young Luba and the "Poison River" that brought her to Palomar.

Listen to the angry punk-thrash bands wailing out of an open window on a hot summer's night. Hear the bubblegum Japanese pop of Shonen Knife wafting in across the desert. There's Doyle Blackburn, hunching over past the playground, hands in pockets, headed from the railyard hobo camp to the downtown soup kitchen.

See that ramshackle house over there, in the middle of the block—Izzy Reubens' place? Izzy's prone to mutter about flies on her ceiling—the neighborhood kids think Izzy's a witch.

Speaking of neighborhood kids, there goes Elias Lincoln, probably headed for another adventure with the Scary, Ghost, Drunker, UFO, Witch Finder Club. His mother, Danita, once danced topless at Bumper's before it shut down. She's now seeing Ray Dominguez, who used to go out with Maggie, whom no one has seen for a long time now.

"Maggie" is Maggie Chascarillo. This is Maggie's world, hers and Esperanza Glass', the world of Hoppers, a barrio community just outside of Los Angeles -a world created by Jaime Hernandez.

Just across the room—but half a world away—is the realm of Gilbert Hernandez. The existence he has created tastes of dust and fried babosas (slugs), reels in the erotic sounds of salsa music and swelters Central American tropical heat, simmering in the sexual politics and secrets of its residents. Here you can travel with a mysterious woman called Luba, watch as her prominence in the town grows from bañadora (bathing woman) to alcaldesa (lady mayor); as she raises her prodigious progeny and comes to symbolize the mythic earth mother. Gilbert's is a world that witnesses the growth of its residents, their lives, their traumas, their loves, their deaths, their heartbreaks. (Don't worry about that last. Pipo's recipe for heartbreak soup eases emotional pain.)

Gilbert's town is called Palomar, which means "pigeon coop."

Palomar and Hoppers.

The lives of the people who live there, and the people those people touch, unfold in the "Heartbreak Soup" and "Los Locas" stories that appear in the black-and-white comic *Love and Rockets*.

Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez—born in Oxnard, California to the north of Los Angeles—began blending the influences and stories of their youth 10 years ago into their own comic. Readers can now see the Hernandezes' twin worlds come to life before them. Those worlds are as complex, as real, as those found between the pages of

YOU'RE RIGHT
YOU MAY LOOKING AT CHOPPED LIVER HERE, G RLY GIRL
I KNOW, I GUESS I JUST HAVE TO BE TOLD ONCE IN A WHILE
WE MAY ALMOST HAVE MORE FUN!
SO PERRY ASSETS SHE WASN'T THE ONE WHO PLASTERED MY FACE ALL OVER THOSE CARTONS. I'M BEGINNING TO THINK IT WAS MY STUPID HEAD BROTHER...
OH HAI
!?
HERE'S THAT DUDE, MY BRO
AND HERE'S ME WONDER WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE ANYWAY!?

Co-creator Jaime Hernandez likes Maggie because "there's nothing mysterious about her," but sees Hopey as "my biggest challenge."

I BELIEVE IN LIFE... IN BABIES... I WANT A BABY THE MOST OF EVERYTEENS IN DE WORLD
HUH...YEAH. I GUESS KIDS ARE PRETTY COOL... I SURE HAVE PRETTY COOL MEMORIES OF, LIKE, UH, WHEN I COULD GET RIPPED ON JUST ONE BONG HIT...
SMOKE. DRINK. TAKE DRUGS. ACT UP. K.
All Love & Rockets Art: Gilbert Hernandez, Jaime Hernandez

Deteriorating relationships spark *L&R*'s "Love and Rockets" storyline.

any novel, or even in the living rooms of neighbors just down the street.

When *Love and Rockets* first appeared in 1982, it was a pastiche of old horror movie style, professional wrestling bravado and comic book formalism—with a healthy dose of punk anarchy and disregard for tradition thrown in. Jaime's Maggie and Hopey appeared in that very first issue. The comic book was first published independently, but was quickly picked up by Fantagraphics, its current publisher. In those early issues, though, Maggie was a prosolar mechanic who traveled a world full of superheroes and dinosaurs, fixing robots and rocket ships.

Jaime's readers, however, were more interested in the lives of his two punkish best friends/lovers—the eternally innocent Maggie and the emotionally conflagrant Hopey—than they were in revolutions in Zimbodia, where Maggie and her fellow mechanics were sent to repair the Saturn Stiletto rocket ship. So, the comics/science fiction elements took back stage, and the lives of Maggie, Hopey and their acquaintances took on primary importance.

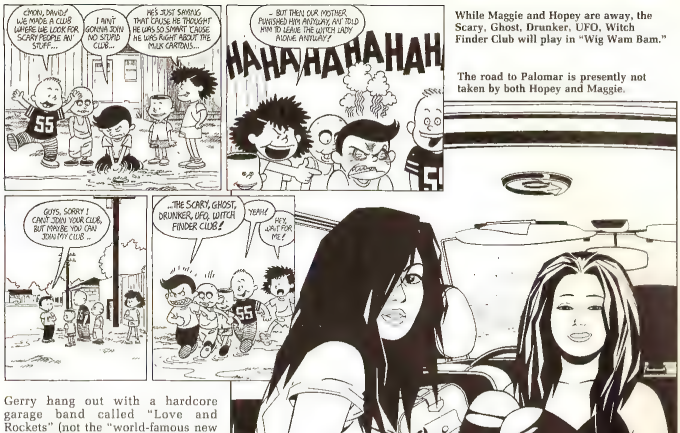
Gilbert's contribution to that first issue was a *Heavy Metal*/monstrous menace/SF piece that saw its hero pursue the evil BEM halfway around the world, and never quite meet up with his nemesis. About issue #3, Gilbert began his Palomar stories, which have been compared to the prose work of Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

With the start of the Palomar stories, his "Heartbreak Soup" series, Gilbert found his voice. The strip began climbing in popularity. Today, its circulation stands at about 20,000—a high figure for an adult, sporadically published (though Gilbert and Jaime promise a more regular schedule), black-and-white alternative comic. The strip, noted for featuring interracial relationships and alternative lifestyles, has outlasted many of its one-time contemporaries of the early '80s alternative explosion. That's a tribute to the book's style and originality.

Expect "more experimental stories" from Gilbert Hernandez, like his biographical strip on Mexican artist Frida Kahlo in *Flies on the Ceiling*.

The current literary storylines in *Love and Rockets* have been underway for two years or more, but those sagas will soon be ending. Jaime's "Wig Wam Bam" saw Maggie and Hopey, reunited after a separation or two years, split up once again. Maggie said she was heading back to California and hasn't been seen since. Hopey has stayed on the East Coast, while everyone in California thinks Hopey is missing. "Wig Wam Bam" focuses on Ray and Danita and the happenings in Hoppers during Maggie and Hopey's absence. That storyline concludes in issue #39.

Also winding up in issue #39 is Gilbert's "Love and Rockets." This nine-chapter serial's focus was not on Palomar, but rather on modern-day LA, where Luba's teenage daughter, Maricela, fled with her lover Riri. The tale also chronicles the exploits of Steve and Gerry, two California surfers who discovered Palomar in one of Gilbert's earlier tales, the multi-faceted "Human Diastrophism" (collected in Fantagraphics' *Blood of Palomar*, Volume Eight of the complete *Love and Rockets*) Steve and


C'MON, DAVID! WE MADE A CLUB WHERE WE LOOK FOR SCARY PEOPLE W/ STUFF...
I AIN'T GONNA JOIN NO STUPID CLUB...
HE'S JUST SAYING THAT CAUSE HE THOUGHT HE WAS SO SMART 'CAUSE HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE MILK CARTONS...
...BUT TRAIL OUR MOTHER PUNISHED HIM ANYWAY, AN' TOLD HIM TO LEAVE THE WITCH LADY ALONE ANYWAY!
HAHAHAHAHAH
GUYS, SORRY I CAN'T JOIN YOUR CLUB, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN JOIN MY CLUB...
...THE SCARY, GHOST, DRUNKER, UFO, WITCH FINDER CLUB!
YEAH!
HEY, WAIT FOR ME!

While Maggie and Hopey are away, the Scary, Ghost, Drunker, UFO, Witch Finder Club will play in "Wig Wam Bam."

The road to Palomar is presently not taken by both Hopey and Maggie.

All Love & Rockets Characters & Art: Copyright 1991, 1995 Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez/Courtesy Fantagraphics

Gerry hang out with a hardcore garage band called "Love and Rockets" (not the "world-famous new music band," says one member, but "a couple of Mexican guys turned us on to the name," says another, a casual reference to the Hernandez brothers) whose main ambition is to play at a party thrown by one of their member's Hollywood socialite mothers. The band's dissolution mirrors the deterioration of Riri and Maricela's relationship.

Another of Gilbert's serials, "Poison River," takes readers back in time, focusing on the events in Luba's life that led her to Palomar and the relationship that she (and her mother) have with gangster Peter Rio. That 12-part story ends in issue #40.

Love and Rockets #40 will be a double-sized issue. Mario Hernandez—who participated with his brothers in the comic in the beginning, but soon dropped out—is doing a story for that issue, which celebrates the title's tenth anniversary. Also commemorating the anniversary are a second *Love and Rockets* sketchbook and a projected series of trading cards.

As for the future of the book itself? From his home in Oxnard (he's preparing to move to LA), Jaime reveals, "I know Maggie's going to be drifting around for a while. She's going to make a stop in Texas, where her dad lives, and I may have her stick around there for a few issues, or she may *stay* there. I'm never sure. That [relocation] will give it a whole new setting, characters and feeling.

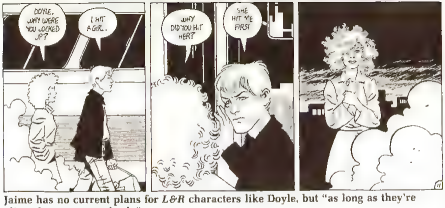
"I'm going to follow Maggie on her own. She's in her mid-twenties now and can't play the irresponsible teenager anymore. It will be a growing-up experience, but as you can always tell, the characters really don't ever grow up."

Jaime, who notes that he plots his stories three or four issues in advance, says, "I'll never get tired of doing her character. I can do her forever. Other characters I can burn out on, but Maggie keeps me interested for some reason. Maybe because she's one of the only characters that you know what's happening inside her mind. I know *everything* about her. There's nothing mysterious about her. There's nothing hidden. What you see is what you get.

"Hopey is one of those characters that's mysterious to me because people like her that I've known in real life, I've only known for a short time. I don't know what happens to people like that—[how] to keep them interesting. Some people just give up living and become duds. But to keep Hopey interesting is really hard...It's a live fast, die young thing. She's just there for the moment. There is no future for her. I don't want to write her out of the story, but at the same time, I don't want to fake it, where she stays young forever.

"She's my biggest challenge. She's a favorite character in the book, and I owe my readers that she be in there every once in a while."

Of Ray, Jamie says, "I put a lot of my thoughts into him. He's a character who can last forever and not do anything. He can be a bum at a normal job, but stuff that goes on around him is interesting. It's like my own life. I'm not the most exciting person, but I have some stories to tell."



Jaime has no current plans for *L&R* characters like Doyle, but "as long as they're alive, they can come back."

Jaime hopes to chronicle the lives of Danita and her son Elias—following Elias and his group of friends introduced in "Wig Wam Bam"—as they grow up in Hoppers.

There are no concrete plans for the future of either Doyle or Izzy, but Jaime adds, "As long as they're alive, they can come back."

Autobiographical elements are a key part of *Love and Rockets*. "I never want to go all the way autobiographically," Jaime observes, "because I know that as truthful as I try to get, someone else always saw events differently. That's why I stick all my true stuff into my characters, because I never get it quite straight.

"Lately, I've been straying away from that. I want to get back into Hoppers. I want to go back into the neighborhood in which I grew up."

Ironically, Gilbert seems poised to put the types of stories he has become known for, at least in part, behind him: "I'm going to be mixing up *Love and Rockets* a little bit more, like we did in the early issues. I'm going to be doing more experimental stories.

"The series I do now are mostly about characters from that small Latin American village. And for a long time, I stayed with those characters. I'm still going to do them, but in shorter stories. And I'm going to experiment more with different styles of drawing and stories, similar to the types of art in *Raw* magazine. It will seem like an anthology book, but it will all be done by the same artist."

This experimentation isn't unprecedented. Fantagraphics' latest *Love and Rockets* collection, *Flies on the Ceiling*, includes Gilbert's biographical strip about Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, which mixes a number of different drawing styles. That same collection includes "a folk tale," which is "a retelling of a classic fable in modern dress," Gilbert says. "It's going to be things like that—more often, instead of once every two years.

"Having drawn 'Poison River' for a couple of years, I want to break out and practice drawing in completely different styles. I might do a story with a Rapidograph or it will be all brush, maybe even do some pencil type stories. Story content will be anything that comes passing through my head.

"When I was in my 'Heartbreak Soup' series a few years ago, I decided that I would have the stories take place in a town called Palomar, and I wanted to end that particular segment of the Palomar stories with all the characters interacting in one story, so I did a long story called 'Human Diastrophism.' Then, I planned to do a story about Luba, from when she was a child until when she came to Palomar. That story ["Poison River"] took much longer than I anticipated, but at the same time, while I was doing it, I was already planning ahead on what I wanted to do—different kinds of comics.

"I hope that I'm skilled enough so that it will be hard to tell what's a parody and what's serious. I will do things of a satiric nature," Gilbert remarks, "but sometimes it will be hard to tell."

Gilbert Hernandez also plans stories involving the Palomar characters and the characters linked to them: "I'll probably be doing stories about Luba's mother and her half-sisters, who have already appeared in the comic, but most of the readers don't know that." Gilbert did an adult sex-fantasy comic called *Birdland* for the Fantagraphics' Eros line. "I was doing the book for fun, and as I was doing it, I came up with a few characters that would be great to use that were related to Luba, because Luba's mother vaguely appears in the *Birdland* story. When Luba's mother left her, she moved to the U.S. and started a family. I'm going to deal with those characters.

"There's this character who's sort of a leg-breaker for some gangsters, Gorgo. He's this big mutant-type, though I hate to use the word mutant. I might do stories about him working for different criminal organizations, just because I feel like doing some crazy, wild, violence stories—sort of what Frank Miller does in 'Sin City' [in *Dark Horse Presents*]—something where the violence is so extreme that you can't really take it seriously.

"I want to go through every extreme I can, only because I feel my reputation in *Love and Rockets* is solid, and I'm free to do anything I want. I don't hold up the book by myself, and my brother will continue doing what he wants to do, which is what he has been doing. That's fine for the readers. That leaves me free to do what I want."

Other Palomar characters that Gilbert has stories planned for are Pipo, who will take her sportswear business to LA, where a sudden influx of riches will heap confusion on her. She'll become instantly rich and won't know how to deal with that situation. Luba's second oldest daughter, Guadalupe, also leaves for the U.S.; she's going as an exchange student and will move in with her sister, Maricela.

Jesús, a contemporary of Pipo's, was sent to prison at the conclusion of 1986's "The Laughing Sun." Gilbert says, "He'll be returning to Palomar. I cheated a little bit in *Love and Rockets* [#37], with Steve going to Palomar. Actually, the reader returns to Palomar with Jesus. He gets out of prison and goes back to Palomar, and we see it through his eyes."

Though plans for proposed *Love and Rockets* films have all fallen through, Los Bros. Hernandez are optimistic that they can bring their creations to the silver screen.

However, Los Bros. are not poised to abandon comics. "With comics," Gilbert announces, "you can create a world that costs very little to produce. Yet if your talent is good enough, you can do as well as any novel or painting. It's a way of telling a story that the outside world, the world that doesn't read comics, hasn't really experienced. So, I think a good comic is a revelation to them."

Jaime says, "Comics are the *only* place I know where you can tell a story with words and pictures, and it's very affordable. I don't have to shell out $60 million to write an epic. I've always loved comics and I'm just in love with the comics form. We're getting more confident as writers and artists. I feel like I'm getting better."

For readers unfamiliar with their work, Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez suggest the Fantagraphics collections, which assemble in chronological order the stories from the comic.

"Try the book. We'll try not to insult your intelligence. Read the book," Jaime Hernandez promises, "and welcome to our worlds."

Fantastic RADIO

By RICH HARVEY

While fans patiently wait for a live-action *Fantastic Four* movie, and debate the merits of the two animated TV versions, *The Marvel Comics Radio Series* remains largely overlooked and forgotten, even by Marvel's staff. The radio series debuted in 1975, following the *daily* adventures of the Fantastic Four, and its disappearance from the airwaves came as quietly as the first broadcast.

The program started innocently enough, series producer Peter B. Lewis recalls from his West Coast home, while Lewis was working for a Long Island radio station in the early '70s. He had been a disc jockey for numerous West Coast radio stations before moving to New York in 1964.

"I was writing radio jingles at the time," says Lewis, "and Robert Michelson, the syndicator of the series, came to me and Richard Clorfene with the idea of producing a Marvel Comics radio series. By chance, I became friends with a jingle-singer whose girl friend worked at Marvel, and she reacted enthusiastically towards the idea."

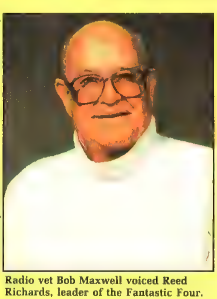
Apparently, she spoke to the right people, for legalities were ironed out soon thereafter. Lewis and Clorfene approached Stan Lee, then Marvel's editor-in-chief, about adapting comic book scripts for the series.

"They asked if they could do a *Fantastic Four* radio show," Lee recalls, "and I thought it was a great idea. For years, I had thought it would be a terrific idea to dramatize our stories on the radio or to make records of them. But that's not our business, and I never really got into it. So, when these fellows called and made the offer, I said, 'Let's do it.' "

OBEY ME, MY PUPPETS! FOR MY WILL IS YOUR WILL! YOU SHALL NEVER ESCAPE YOUR NEW MASTER!
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF! THE PUPPET-MASTER IS MAKING ME ATTACK THE OTHERS!
DON'T, THING! WE MUSTN'T LET HIM CONTROL US!
All Fantastic Four Art Colors, Grossinger Art Jack Kirby

They fought evil on the airwaves—but who remembers the Marvel Comics Radio Series?

LITTLE DO THEY DREAM THAT THEY WILL SOON BE AT THE MERCY OF THE SUB-MARINER!
THE END OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
FANTASTIC FOUR EVICTED FROM BUILDING!
HEROES ONE MINUTE—OUTCASTS THE NEXT! HOW DO IT MEANER TO US-R?
Art Jack Kirby
Photo Courtesy Bob Maxwell



Radio vet Bob Maxwell voiced Reed Richards, leader of the Fantastic Four.

The Marvel Comics Radio Series was nationally syndicated and broadcast in 1975 in a format consisting of five five-minute episodes per week. Listeners were expected to tune in on Monday for part one, and listen until Friday's installment wrapped the week's adventure. "Originally, we wanted to do *The Silver Surfer*," says Lewis. "That's my big interest in Marvel from the get-go, and that's why Richard Clorfene got involved. But I decided we would do *The Fantastic Four*, since that's Marvel's foundation, and then we would do other characters."

Marvel/Screened Photo: Copyright 1968 Paramount Pictures

Flaming on as the Human Torch was a young Bill Murray. Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Sinnott

Scripts were adapted from the earliest Stan Lee/Jack Kirby classics, to capture the flavor of '60s comics. Following a crash reading of *The Fantastic Four*, however, Lewis realized the problem in bringing them to radio.

"The first thing we had to do was throw out stories that were completely visual," says Lewis. "In the first 13 weeks, we had gone through the first *25* magazines. Imagine the difficulty in trying to get Dr. Doom to talk through Reed Richards' voice, from one issue—technically, it would have been a *nightmare*. Those little glimmers of description, so that the audience understands what's happening, obviously *weren't* in the magazines, because that stuff is visual."

Scripts began as minor rewrites, keeping the words almost exactly as in the original comics, and were then condensed slightly to fit a 25-minute time frame. Three months later, Lewis put the finishing touches on "The Fantastic Four Meet the Mole-Man," "The Menace of the Miracle-Man," "The Sub-Mariner Strikes," "Prisoners of Doctor Doom," "Pawns of the Puppet Master," "In the Clutches of Doctor Doom," "The Super-Skrull Walks Among Us," "At the Mercy of Rama Tut," "The Menace of the Red Ghost" and "The Sub-Mariner Strikes."

"I had done enough work with Jerry Terheyden to know that he was diverse enough to play *all* of the villains," says Lewis. "But one of the problems with an ensemble cast is that, sooner or later, you're gonna have the characters talking to each other, with one actor [doing *both* characters]. You can expect that problem when doing a radio show."

A similar problem befell Cynthia Adler, a woman with much experience in cartoon-looping, when she starred as the Invisible Girl. "Sue Storm wasn't very demanding, so Adler also played Alicia Masters and Ant-Man [in "The Micro-World of Doctor Doom"], and she did really well with that."

Golden-throated announcer Bob Maxwell had done voice-overs for numerous commercials and TV specials. "I knew he could act, and he played on *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet* and *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon*. He's a true radio veteran. From the outset, I knew I wanted Bob for Reed Richards, and Bill Murray [yes, *that* Bill Murray] for Johnny Storm. I wanted Murray to play Johnny Storm because I thought he had a very unique voice. I had always liked him, and he had this enthusiasm and seniority in his voice."

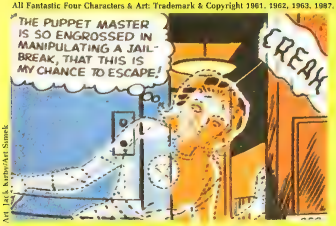
Lewis met the up-and-coming comedian after being involved with *The National Lampoon Radio Hour*, another program syndicated by Robert Michelson. When that series concluded its national run, Lewis approached Murray—who has since, of course, starred on *Saturday Night Live* and made numerous films like *Ghostbusters*—with the offer to play the Human Torch.

"Bill had never heard of *The Fantastic Four*," says Lewis, "had barely heard of Marvel Comics, and *never*

Art: Jack Kirby/Art Simek

Though John Belushi wanted the job, Jim Pappas got to sound off as the Thing.

All Fantastic Four Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1961, 1962, 1963, 1987, 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group


THE PUPPET MASTER IS SO ENGROSSED IN MANIPULATING A JAIL-BREAK, THAT THIS IS MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE!
CREAK
HE-HE HEARD ME!
WHO OPENED THE DOOR? THE GIRL! SHE'S GONE!

Art: Jack Kirby/Art Simek

Cynthia Adler voiced Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl.

read the scripts in advance. He never knew what the hell was goin' on. I ended up recording a bunch of lines with him alone, so that the words were on tape somewhere. I don't think this was the crowning glory of his acting career, but he was himself. You can see in the movies he has done since then what kind of guy he is. He's just acting his life."

When Murray became involved, another *National Lampoon Radio Hour* veteran (and future *SNL* co-star) got interested, too. "John Belushi came to me and asked if he could play the Thing," Lewis recalls, "and I chose to decline. I wanted *The Fantastic Four* to have its own unique sound, and I was afraid that, if Belushi and Murray were both involved, people would think it was another edition of the *National Lampoon*. I think I made the right choice.

"I auditioned about a half-dozen people to play Ben Grimm, and Jim Pappas was the winner. I don't think he was an actor, or that he had any experience on the microphone before playing the Thing. He was just some guy that the agent sent over.

"Still, I know I made the right choices with the cast, and they all performed *brilliantly*, considering that I had a week to get these things done."

The producers chose Stan Lee as the series' narrator, a natural bit of casting since the scripts were all adapted from the original Lee/Kirby issues. However, brought in for the dramatic readings, Lee constantly stumbled over his own words. He didn't fluently speak Marvel-ese—"Face Front, True Believers" and "Make Mine Marvel," for example.

"Stan kept looking up from the mike and asking, 'Did I write this?' I showed him what he had written and how I modified it to make it a little easier and fun for the ear.

"You can probably tell at times that he's struggling through the copy. He's a writer, after all, *not* a reader. We did a good job of recording him and editing the good takes together, but now, anybody who doesn't recognize Stan Lee's voice wonders *why* we used him."

The dialogue among all of the actors was recorded within a week-and-a-half, so that Lewis could return to Seattle, where he and his wife had relocated and where post-production took place.

"It was hard to do that show," Lewis sighs, "and keep it interesting for 65 episodes. Just about every place had an ambient sound effect—Reed's laboratory, the Mole Man's cave, Dr. Doom's castle. Radio allows you to give a sense of place, so besides descriptive information, I tried to create atmospheres for each place, which wasn't easy.

"I looked at the image of the Fantastic Four flare-gun, and couldn't figure out what it would be, but I knew it had to have the word 'four' in it, and that it would have to be ascending. And it had to have some kind of explosion. I merged the three notions with Craig Turner, the synthesist, and I think it worked, although it certainly *isn't* what I'd do today."

The Human Torch's flame-on and flying was accomplished, quite simply, with a blow torch. The

THE FANTASTIC FOUR!" HAH! LITTLE DO THEY DREAM THEY ARE NAUGHT BUT PAWNS IN THE HANDS OF DOCTOR DOOM!
PART 1
Stan Lee
J. KIRBY
DEMONS!
SCIENCE and SORCERY

Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Sinnott

One actor—Jerry Terheyden—played all the villains

Album Cover Art: William Kuhns

The Marvel Comics Radio Series

The series was serviced to client stations in record form. Each LP bore the Marvel Radio brand.

synthesizer suggested Sue Storm's invisibility and Reed Richards' stretching-powers. "We wound up dumping stones in bags, and then walking them across the floor to give Ben Grimm rock-feet," he laughs.

Describing the fight scene was a weekly headache. "The *real stars* of Marvel Comics are the *artists*, not the writers, and that's what they're best at doing," says Lewis. "It might not have been a smart idea to take these very powerful visuals and convert them into sound. These monsters and villains were hard enough to re-create for sound, and now looking back, I'm not sure we did such a good job.

"I saw that we were in quicksand with *The Fantastic Four*, so we might have done four more episodes before we leap-frogged over to *The Incredible Hulk* or *The Silver Surfer*. Those were two that I thought would be quick hits, and doing sounds for those characters wouldn't require re-inventing the wheel each time. I also thought that people would probably respond to them even more than *The Fantastic Four*."

The Incredible Hulk carried over well on radio, thanks to Jerry Terheyden's ability to play both Dr. Banner and his Gamma-powered alter-ego—although there were a few problems when Bob Maxwell had to play both Reed Richards *and* Rick Jones, characters who had numerous conversations in "The Fantastic Four Meet the Incredible Hulk." In "The Horrible Harrassment of the Hate-Monger," Terheyden also played Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., so well that a radio series should have been given to *that* character.

According to Lewis, had the program continued, that *might* have happened. "*The Marvel Comics Radio Series* was meant to be an umbrella for *all* of the Marvel line-up," he says. "We had the rights to 10 other characters; I don't remember which ones.

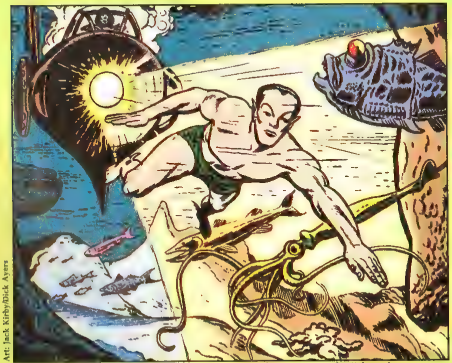
Lewis Photo: By & Copyright Joel Pelsky

Peter B. Lewis produced the Fantastic Four's radio adventures.

"I started working on the next 13 weeks, but I hadn't planned which storylines we were going to do. I was so exhausted when we finished the first 65 episodes—not just from the work, but the harrassment surrounding the money—that I never bothered to make any long-term plans."

Art: Jack Kirby/Art Simek

Stan Lee narrated the series, sometimes struggling through his own words.



Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

Radio veteran Peter B. Lewis adapted the original Stan Lee-Jack Kirby tales featuring such characters as the Red Ghost, Rama Tut and the Sub-Mariner.

The Marvel Comics Radio Series suffered the same difficulties that victimized radio comedy and drama two decades earlier. Television had stolen most of the audiences, and the radio station listings on the Bullpen Bulletins page (which ran in all Marvel Comics) were barely noticed. There was no national advertiser, which crippled the show financially—a commercial selling Fantastic Four T-shirts didn't

(continued on page 58)

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FF Radio

(continued from page 56)

help either.

"It's hard to sit down and figure out why it didn't work," Lewis says, " 'cause I only heard it in Seattle. At the station where it played in my town, they loved it. They thought it was the coolest thing they ever heard—but maybe that's because they were talking to me directly. The radio stations running the show all seemed pretty enthusiastic about it. There was a lot of sadness when there weren't another 65 episodes to do."

The same problem befell another series that Lewis engineered years later, called *Roger Fayes, Certified Public Accountant*, "which was a disaster. The producer actually went out and *sold his car* to fund the project! I told him not to do that, to get other people's money. I saw him two years ago. He writes games for Nintendo now, and he does pretty well at it. *Never* use your own money."

Lewis learned that lesson well after the demise of *The Marvel Comics Radio Series*, which cost a staggering $47,000 to produce, and generated only $22,000 in revenue. He is now the president of Audisee Productions and the major stockholder of the Better Sound All Around Corporation, a Seattle-based sound and video company.

"We've won tons of awards for producing commercials. I design soundtracks and playback systems for huge trade shows and retail stores. I also do soundtracks for video-walls. It's a different world here in the '90s.

"At this point in my life, I would love to do another radio series. Radio has always been my love, but the problem is that there isn't *any* money or interest in it."

And he thinks that anyone inclined to do another Marvel radio program would be better off starting from scratch.

"We had very limited toys in those days," says Peter B. Lewis, "and we just didn't have much electronic equipment to mess around with. The stuff now is so much more sophisticated than what was available in 1975.

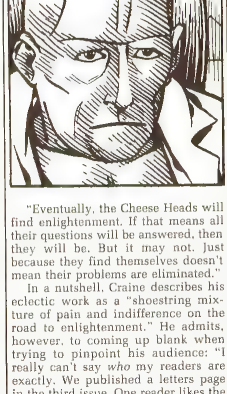
"Don't misunderstand me—I would love to see *The Fantastic Four* get back into syndication, or be re-released in any form. Thousands of Marvel fans would really get off on hearing this stuff. And I would love to do *properly-funded* radio programs again. It's enjoyable, it's meaningful, and it touches a segment of the audience that the things I'm doing now just don't touch."

Cheese

(continued from page 16)

maker, who they finally meet around issue #7. Some readers will figure this out beforehand, and that's the idea. The challenge of a good writer is to lay out the information like a map. You don't have to look too hard for hints, but you *do* have to look.

"The Cheese Heads' maker will offer some very confusing pearls of wisdom and then send them on their way. He'll be a very old fisherman/janitor-type, who is brilliant. He's one of those people who speaks four words and you never have to read a book again.



"Eventually, the Cheese Heads will find enlightenment. If that means all their questions will be answered, then they will be. But it may not. Just because they find themselves doesn't mean their problems are eliminated."

In a nutshell, Craine describes his eclectic work as a "shoestring mixture of pain and indifference on the road to enlightenment." He admits, however, to coming up blank when trying to pinpoint his audience: "I really can't say *who* my readers are exactly. We published a letters page in the third issue. One reader likes the urban intrigue. Another likes it because of the nonsensical images, and finds it funny and disturbing. *The Cheese Heads* attracts all kinds."

From the beginning, Craine says, he was confident that *The Cheese Heads* could succeed as a comic book. Still, he believes the power of comics remains largely untapped.

"It's a fresh medium, and a relatively young medium, with loads of potential," notes Nick Craine. "There are so many things that haven't been done. We've only scratched the tip of the iceberg."

Shadowhawk

(continued from page 46)

of them. You may save one or two things for yourself, like future projects, but I don't think *anybody* really holds back ideas."

What comes after the first *Shadowhawk* series? Don't look for Valentino's work at Marvel—he was let go from *The Guardians of the Galaxy*. "After all the public statements I've made about wanting to stay on *Guardians* and trying not to 'dis' Marvel in any way, shape or form, I was *fired* from the book. I've never missed a deadline and I've never refused a change within reason. The stated reason was: 'It would make it easier for me to work on my other projects and would relieve my stress.' That's a direct quote and you can verify it. So, getting fired is going to relieve my personal stress. I thought that was real generous and considerate of them."

The artist plans to concentrate on work at Image Comics. He already has a few ideas for projects. "There are a couple of series I want to do, but one's coming up immediately," he reveals. "It's called *The Others*. If Homo sapiens are an evolutionary offshoot from a basic primate, why couldn't other animals have had less successful offshoots? These 'Others' would be the basis of mythological creatures and, for one reason or another, weren't as successful in reproducing. The comic's premise is that there are very few Others and they've been hiding from the basic-primate human stock. They can't hide anymore because the world has become too small and they're tired of hiding."

And there's no question that Valentino enjoys working on *Shadowhawk* and will someday return to the character. "I see *Shadowhawk* as an ongoing thing and not as being finite. When you start a brand-new series, much of it is figuring out who your characters are and giving them a place to run in. After a while, they start running by themselves as you get to know them more and more. I'm very excited about it. It's nice to be doing something new and it's nice to be doing a single character."

Summing up his work on *Shadowhawk*, Jim Valentino hopes his pleasure will be contagious and that the character will appeal to a wide range of readers. "Hopefully, it'll be a well-written, well-drawn comic book that's exciting," he says. "I think *Shadowhawk* is a more character-motivated thing than a guest-star-of-the-month club. It's interesting and fun."

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Keaton

(continued from page 12)

putting to rest the doomsayers who claimed he couldn't play Batman. "Any problems I had with the fans on the first film are over. I don't think there's any doubt that I can play this guy. I'm so convinced of that fact that I have to admit that it would be pretty strange to see someone else playing Batman. I would be curious to see if somebody else could pull it off, and if he was really good, I would probably be very upset. It could happen, but I'm *not* going to worry about it."

Why should he? He's too busy basking in the emotional perks that *Batman* has afforded him.

"Playing Batman has definitely turned up the volume on my career four or five notches," he admits. "Nobody could be more appreciative of the opportunities this role has given me. It's nice to walk down the street and have kids get excited. I don't have the anonymity that I had before *Batman*, but that came as no surprise. I knew I would lose that when I agreed to do these films."

Keaton, who says he would do a *Beetlejuice* sequel, "but I don't think something like that could be written again," adds that a third Batman movie is something that's still up in the air as far as he's concerned.

"*If* there's a third Batman movie and all the ingredients are in place, hopefully, I would be happy to do it again. But right now, it would have to be Tim or somebody who had a real interesting and different take on Batman for *me* to be interested again."

The actor claims to be partial to any Burton-directed vehicle, and it goes deeper than talent or material.

"Tim and I relate to each other on a pretty basic and strange level. We both find really odd things funny, and we both feel the other is quite normal, which probably makes us both weird."

Batman Returns explains why the Penguin and Catwoman are attracted to penguins and cats in a fairly subtle, psychotic manner. Through two films, moviegoers have yet to get a crystal-clear explanation of Batman's affection for bats. Michael Keaton stumbles around an explanation before attempting one theory.

"It's difficult, and hopefully, a third film might take some time to clarify this. Bats frighten people, and maybe there's something in that which appeals to his personality. I don't know for sure. Bats come out at night, which may have something to do with it. Yeah, that *could* be it.

"It's something about the night."

Batman

(continued from page 40)

I had to do tell it obliquely, because I can't show people getting killed on Saturday morning, God forbid!

"I did it by cutting to lightning flashing across the sky during the gunshots. Everybody watching at home has a good idea of what happened, but you don't actually see the murders. That's how I got around it. I enjoyed writing that show," he says. "I tried to push the envelope."

Burnett respects the entire Batheritage. "Adam West [STARLOG #114] did Batman's voice on my *Super Friends* episode, and he was quite wonderful," Burnett states. "He's a very good dramatic actor and had to do scenes where Batman was choking back tears. He pulled it off! He's in an episode of our show, 'Beware, The Grey Ghost!'

"The Grey Ghost was Bruce Wayne's favorite TV superhero as a boy. Now, 20 years later, Batman's investigating a series of bombings and realizes the pattern fits an old Grey Ghost episode. He seeks out the actor who played the Ghost, and they have an adventure together. Adam West plays the actor!"

Batman is more action-packed than *any* cartoon since *Jonny Quest*. In the pilot, "On Leather Wings," which features Man-Bat, Batman suffers numerous facial cuts. "That's as bloody as Batman's face will get," Burnett states. "The network started to pull back on the amount of blood, scratches and abrasions we can have. That first episode almost used up our whole quota! Batman *will* get injured in the series. We have a story where he's blinded, and, in 'Two-Face,' we suggest he has broken his leg."

Despite the wall-to-wall thrills, the producer doesn't expect an outcry from parents. "We did a lot of testing with parents and children on the pilot, which has some pretty violent scenes where Batman and Man-Bat both get pretty beat up, and nobody was bothered by it.

"My 10-year-old son Nicholas has helped on *Batman* by letting me know what he likes in the episodes I've shown him. I've used my children as barometers throughout my animation writing career. It's wise to try and see through their eyes."

He has a unique way of rewarding them. "In every season of animation I've worked, there have been characters named Nicholas, Andrea and Melanie," he grins. "Usually, if there are kids in the show, I name them after mine. Nicholas is the boy in 'I've Got a Batman in My Basement.' Batman's gassed by the Penguin and saved by a 12-year-old boy."

Batman's greatest foe may be the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department. "Fox's BS&P department is the best I've ever worked with, but they're trying to protect the network from irate parents," Burnett notes. "Nonetheless, we still have arguments. The latest is over the Penguin—they want the cigarette holder out of his mouth!

"I just can't do it—that would be like taking the pipe out of Popeye's mouth! We also had arguments with BS&P over letting Batman and Catwoman kiss. They didn't want them to kiss and we did.

"The biggest battles have been over language. One problem we have to watch out for is when we endanger children on the show. When a character is under 12, we have to look out for child endangerment. Over 12, we can get away with more. We're telling Robin's origin, and he's eight.

"As a child, he goes out to find Tony Zucco, the man who killed his parents, so we had to watch how dangerous the situations we put Robin in were."

Still, it's much easier than Burnett's last superhero assignment. "Let me tell you something," he confides. "When I worked on *Super Friends*, *nobody* could throw a punch, even if it didn't connect! We could destroy robots *only* if they were non-human looking. There were other strange things. It's a wonder to me that an adventure show with *any* bite to it at all could be done on Saturday morning. The Fox broadcast standards people recognize what we're trying to do with *Batman*, in trying to make a gritty, realistic, action-adventure show. They've been much more open to ideas than any BS&P department I've ever worked with."

As for Bat-action, "We're allowed a certain leeway in fight scenes, but they don't like punches in the face! We get away with martial arts-type punches, but a real roundhouse punch has been, of late, hard to do—we had a couple early on. Still, we've told the stories we *wanted* to tell."

Alan Burnett enjoys working in Gotham City. "I tired of *The Smurfs* after the first year," he admits. "I did a good job, but wearied of them. I am now through 55 shows of *Batman* and I'm not tired of him at all! Batman is a great character.

"We have 55 scripts written with 10 more to go. There's talk of doing a movie-length cassette version and possibly 43 more episodes down the line. It all depends on how well these are received. I hope they're liked, because Warner Bros. is trying to do a quality product. It's a real team effort, with everybody working at the top of their craft. We want to make this *Batman* special!"

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I'M NOT LISA

I've had no luck in voice-overs," laughs Yeardley Smith, the voice of America's animated darling, Lisa Simpson. "She's the only one I ever did. After we hit it big, I had a voice-over agent who sent me around to everything. We would get somewhere and it would be, 'That's *all* you do?'

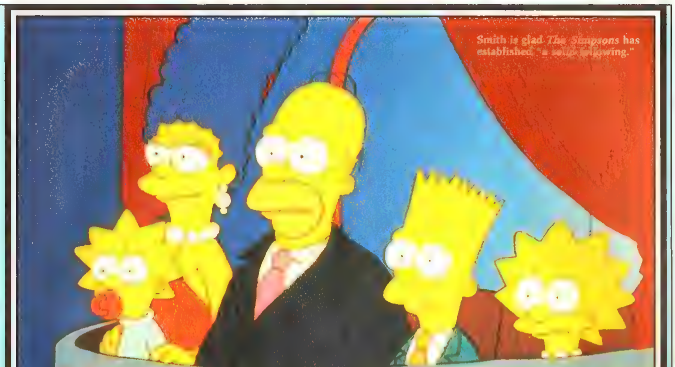
"Some people can do 50 different things with their voice. I do three and they all sound the same. The voice-over world is a tight circle. There are a handful of people that advertisers use over and over again."

Though Smith appeared on Broadway in *The Real Thing* (with Jeremy Irons) and in such films as *Heaven Help Us*, *Legend of Billie Jean* and *Maximum Overdrive*, she was relatively unknown to the public. Of course, providing the voice of Bart's sax-playing sister helped pay the bills, but audiences still couldn't match her face with Lisa's voice.

All of that changed when *City Slickers* lassoed in more than $100 million at the box office. Smith nearly stole the show as the grocery store check-out girl who unsubtly announces her pregnancy at Billy Crystal's birthday party. "One of the hooks when the film was released was, 'Now you can finally see Lisa Simpson.' It's funny from my point-of-view," explains Smith. "You could have seen many other things with me in them, too, but that's just the way the business works.

"One of the great things we did in the beginning of *The Simpsons* was to keep us as anonymous as possible so that those characters could exist in their own right as separate entities, which they do so well. It wasn't important for people to see who we were. That was great for me because I'm a private person. I can be on this hit show and still go to the market, and no one bothers me in the bread aisle. I'm in heaven here. I could walk into a sea of *Simpsons* paraphernalia and just listen to all the chatter around me about how much people like the show."

Two days a week, Dan Castellaneta (CS SPECTACULAR #4), Julie Kavner, Nancy Cartwright, Smith and the other *Simpsons* voices gather with show-creator Matt Groening, the writers and producers. The actors stand in a semi-circle, each with their own microphone, in the basement of a theater on the 20th Century Fox lot. "We read the script scene by scene and we get rewrites up to the very last minute. It's like a radio play," she says. "The writing is wonderful, and the fact that we are able to interact and take the time to do it as we do makes it so very much alive. And the animation is incredible, too.



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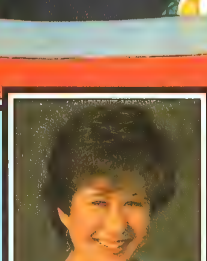
"If anyone wanted to do a retrospective from the one-minute segments to this week's show...it's like day and night. Even the voices are different. They were much harder in the beginning. The characters' faces were much more angular, much less appealing. They've sort of rounded us out to make us a little more palatable. Our part in it, the voices, is such a small part of the whole process. We do the voices, then the animators spend the next six months animating that one episode. A million things have to be done before it reaches our little TV box."

These days, in addition to voicing Lisa, Smith co-stars as Louise, a research assistant in the Fox-TV comedy, *Herman's Head*. William Ragsdale stars as Herman, a magazine fact checker whose head is filled, literally, with conflicting emotions and urges. Every impending decision sends the camera inside his head, where "Wimp," "Angel," "Genius" and "Animal" battle over the outcome. Louise is Herman's close friend, as well as the office wit.

"The show is good and I think it has a great deal of potential, room for relationships to develop, chances to be taken," Smith enthuses. "They definitely give me all the good lines and they mostly give me wonderful things to do. I think it'll get even better."



Herman's Head Photo: Andrew Eccles/Copyright 1992 Fox/Boone TV

Being the hidden face behind Lisa Simpson is "great for me because I'm a private person."

Smith, who is married and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and cat, thanks her lucky stars for her current good fortune. "I love it now, being swamped for once. I'm just so happy to go to work every day, because it's so rare in this business. It's feast or famine and mostly famine," she decides. "*The Simpsons* sustained me for a couple of years there, kept me in cans of tuna for a good long time when things were dry. Then, I got more attention for a few minutes in *City Slickers* than practically anything I had done. I'm really very, very lucky."

As for the future, Yeardley Smith expects *The Simpsons* to remain on the air for at least another three or four years, then head into the colorful (green) world of syndication. Another album, on the heels of the successful *Simpsons Sing the Blues*, seems likely, too. "I sang three songs on the first album, 'God Bless the Child,' 'The Moaning Lisa Blues' and a duet with Bart called 'Sibling Rivalry.' It was probably the most fun I've ever had. It was a blast," she says, "and I think people were pleasantly surprised. I'm sure we'll do another one.

"The whole [*Simpsons*] experience has been wonderful fun. Now we've established a solid following. It's as if we've come into our own. When you have that much hype, as we did, you also have that much doubt. People, essentially, are waiting for you to crash and burn. There are still plenty of cynics out there who think, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, let's see how it does this season.' And this season has been as good as the others. It's nice that we have found our niche and established ourselves as a legitimate thing."

—Ian Spelling

In REMEMBRANCE
William M. Gaines
1922-1992

Photo: Sheelagh J. Wells

For 40 years, William Gaines was at the forefront of the *MAD* generation.

Whenever the name William Gaines is mentioned, the word *Mad* almost inevitably follows. It's impossible to think of *Mad* magazine, an irreverent part of American pop culture for 40 years, without acknowledging Gaines. The shaggy-haired, bespectacled publisher, whose rumpled exterior concealed a razor-sharp head for business, took a 10-cent comic book in 1952, and over the next 40 years, transformed it into one of the world's most popular humor magazines. Gaines' biographer Frank Jacobs said it best: "Gaines and *Mad*, like a boy and his frog, are inseparable."

Gaines began his publishing career in 1947 when his father Max was killed in a boating accident. As he laughingly recalled in a 1991 CS interview (#21), Gaines was hardly ready to fill his father's shoes. "I was supposed to be a chemistry professor—what was I doing there? I came down and started off by signing a few checks and playing gin rummy with my cousin all day long. Little by little, I began to get interested."

Over the next several years, Gaines set to work, transforming his father's faltering company into a thriving concern. With the help of a young artist named Al Feldstein, he introduced new titles to their line of comics—love, crime and Westerns—and it wasn't long before the two men turned to an area that was closer to their hearts. "When I was a kid," said Gaines, "I read the horror and science fiction pulp magazines. When I became a publisher of comics, I went into what I had liked as a kid, and that was horror and science fiction."

Together, Gaines and Feldstein launched a new line of SF and horror comics that broke every pre-existing taboo. With titles like *The Vault of Horror*, *Tales From the Crypt* (later adapted as an HBO anthology series) and *The Haunt of Fear*, the EC books became a huge success, spawning numerous imitations. Unfortunately, that success was short-lived. In 1954, Gaines testified before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee investigating the impact of horror comics on children. "I went in there a little more bravely than I might have if they had just dragged me in by the hair, which they did to all the other publishers." Soon after that, he was forced to discontinue his horror line due to mounting public pressure. The only title that continued to sell was a little humor book called *Mad*.

Under the editorial aegis of Harvey Kurtzman and later Al Feldstein, *Mad* began to take off. Its wacky brand of humor was best exemplified by mascot Alfred E. Neuman, a gap-toothed idiot whose motto, "What, me worry?" became an American catch phrase.

Although Gaines eventually sold his interest in *Mad* (to Warner Communications), he continued to act as publisher and was given free rein by the new owners. He refused to solicit advertising, made only minimal effort to attract subscribers, and changed the magazine's pay scales so that his writers would receive the same rate as artists. "I still say to this day that the script writer is the most important thing to *any* entertainment business, be it movies, TV, comics, anything. If you don't have a good story, you have *nothing*."

Gaines continued to encourage a feeling of family among his workers, paying generous bonuses and taking them on trips around the world. He also always credited *Mad*'s success to his staff. "The only thing I've had is luck," he insisted. "It's not my talent; it's the talent of my staffs. The only talent I had is getting a good staff."

William Gaines died in his sleep at his Manhattan home on June 3, 1992. He is survived by his wife and three children, as well as the freckle-faced, idiot son he adopted in the 1950s. Alfred E. Neuman will probably grace the covers of *Mad* for many years to come, but that gap-toothed smile just won't be as bright or cheerful as it used to be.

—Joe Nazzaro

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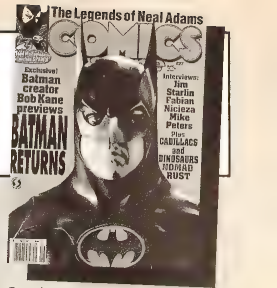
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Overlord

(continued from page 28)

step further. It was the Buscema-Adams combination for a long time, but then, as I matured, Frank Frazetta became a big influence as I started painting. Painters became a big influence. Then, I discovered the foreign comics and Moebius," says Bingham.

It took Bingham a little while to break into comics, and he doesn't care for his early work.

"I had a *long* way to go when I first started out in the business," he says. "I was probably lucky to get work. It was tough to find a groove, because I was bouncing from book to book. A regular job that keeps you working constantly is when you *really* find yourself growing artistically, and find the most improvement. It took a long time for me to find anything I was pleased with."

The first of his major works that he was truly proud of was the *Beowulf* graphic novel from First Comics.

"I finished the artwork before I even started peddling it," Bingham says. "I was proud of that one, because it was my own work, and because it was something that I worked very hard on to translate, both verbally and visually. I think it worked very well.

"And I'm also proud of *Batman: Son of the Demon*. I spent a lot of time on that. I've always been a Batman fan," he says, noting that he is discussing another Batman graphic novel. Although Bingham didn't work on *Batman: Bride of the Demon*—the follow-up to *Son* –he may do a third book.

"When they asked me to do a sequel [to *Son*], it was right after the first book. Two weeks later, [writer] Mike W. Barr approached me and said, 'How would you like to do a second book?' I told him I just couldn't handle it right then—I had to go meditate or something. But, Mike and I have been discussing a new story for the characters, and DC is trying to hash out a contract with us now. In the meantime, I'm doing a couple of issues of *Amazing Spider-Man*."

In addition to Batman and Spider-Man, Jerry Bingham is keeping busy—if closed-mouthed—about projects of his own. Now that he has worked with one of his comic heroes, he's planning a personal endeavor. "I've been writing some things on my own, and one of these days I'll pull together a comic story of my own. I've been working on one for a little while, with my own characters. I want to see if it comes to fruition!"

Jones

(continued from page 32)

These characters lend themselves well to his current style and horror art theories.

"Dark characters generally have more introspection to them. Things aren't as simple with them. There's usually something wrong with them,

By "taking the name literally," Jones created a "much more interesting" Deadman, and he'll do so again in another mini-series.

and yet they still have to go out and do what they have to do.

"For example, Deadman. He wants some kind of normality in his bizarre existence. So, I try to think what that would be, do some Method-acting and get material. I want more to do beyond drawing a good posed shot. I'm trying to apply Steve Ditko's Spider-Man to horror. To me, dark means character-motivated."

But Jones grew up reading comics, and there are many characters, not necessarily dark, that he would like to illustrate.

"Yeah, there's probably a ton. I don't really know offhand. I haven't read many comics lately. But I'm a fan boy from the late '60s, so characters like Thor and Iron Man have a big appeal to me. There are many characters I *could* do. I've been fortunate that my experiments sell, so I can keep on experimenting."

While Jones believes that he has been successful in experimenting with character concepts, he also thinks that some of his technical experiments haven't been as successful. "I like to try out different techniques in my drawing, and sometimes they don't work. I was doing some pointillism techniques, and sometimes it worked, but most of the time, it just looked like bad skin. And I do crazy things with zips. Barbara Kesel calls me up when she gets a batch of my work and says, 'OK, what zips are we getting rid of?'"

The lure of other projects is sometimes irresistible. "The tough part of this business is timing. There are always projects and there are always deadlines.

"But there are some things you just can't say no to. Millennium approached me to do the art for Harlan Ellison's short story, 'Shattered Like a Glass Goblin.' I couldn't pass that up. It was 14 pages that I was really happy with. Faye Perozich did the actual adaptation, but Harlan oversaw everything. I wouldn't have minded doing it as a 40-page story, because there's so much there, but it works great. It's going to be wonderful."

And Jones has his schedule booked up well into 1993 with a variety of projects. "I'm working on the sequel for *Deadman* that should be out by October. It'll be the same format as the first one, so I'm pencilling and inking it. Then, there's the Batman stuff. Way down the line is some stuff with Neil Gaiman, maybe another *Sandman* before it's cancelled. I'm talking with Mike Baron about a four-issue superhero thing. I've also been developing some projects with Tom Veitch. I feel bad because he's done most of the work on them so far. He's the best writer I haven't been able to work with yet. But if things break positively, then we'll fit things in."

Jones plans to stay out of the limelight (he rarely goes to conventions, and has only recently started doing signings), remain at home with classical music playing and just keep drawing. "I haven't drawn enough yet. I don't have a body of work."

Body of work. With Jones, his body of work invites artistic autopsy. It's a body of work in the shape of a corpse—a corpse that comes alive under the talented hands of Kelley Jones, artist of the Living Dead.

COMICS screen

All projects are live-action unless specified. Those based are new or updated since last listing. **Not everything listed will ultimately ever be made.** Legend, S: script, D: director, P: producer, C: creator, AN: animated; LA: live-action; Syn: syndicated, HB: Hanna-Barbera, Nel: Nelvana, MWS: Murakami-Wolf-Swenson, KB: Rankin-Bass, WD: Disney, WB: Warner Bros., PP: Paramount, U: Universal, Col: Columbia, FF: Fanboy/Bob Films. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 6/12/92)

Addams Family. Sequel. PP. AN series. ABC. HB. Fall.

The Airtight Garage. AN. S: Randy Loffician

❑ **Aladdin.** AN film. WD. P/D/S: Ron Clements, John Musker. Nov.

Alias. Film. U. S: David S. Goyer. P: P. Lenkov. S. Daniel.

Alice in Wonderland. TV series. Disney Channel

The American. Film. P: Joel Silver. S: Mark Verheiden.

American Tail. AN TV series. *Fievel's American Tails.* Amblin. Nel./U. Fall. CBS.

Animaniacs. AN syn TV. WB/Amblin. Fall '93

❑ **Annie.** Film. (see below) Stage musical sequel *Annie Warbucks.* C: Charnin. Meehan. Strouse

Archie. LA Film. S: N. & D Ephron. D: J. Schumacher. DIC.

Carol Photo: Jim Farber

The Sun will come up tomorrow—actually next spring—when Patrick Stewart begins filming the non-musical sequel, *Annie and the Castle of Terror.* He's, of course, the new Daddy Warbucks.

Baby Huey. AN short. U. S: Bill Kopp.

Bad Baby. AN TV. Imag.

Barbarella. LA film. Nel.

Barbie. Film. Abrams/Gentile Ent. & Mattel.

❑ **Batman.** AN series. Fall. Fox. (see article)

❑ **Battletoads.** AN TV pilot. DIC. Bohbot. Airs Thanksgiving.

❑ **Beakman's World.** Syn LA series. Col TV/U. Based on *You Can with Beakman.* Col.

❑ **Bebe's Kids.** AN film. PR. In release.

Beetlejuice. AN series. FBC.

❑ **Beyond the Yellow Dragons.** AN film. Fox/HB. '93.

The Black Cat. Film. Sean Young.

Blackhawk. Film. Amblin S: Dan Aykroyd.

❑ **Blackman.** Film. C: Damon & Keenan Ivory Wayans.

❑ **Black Panther.** Film. W/ Wesley Snipes.

Blinky Bill. Australian AN film. P. Yoram Gross. '92.

Blondie. Film. WB. P: Joel Silver.

Bonkers D. Bobcat. Syn AN series. WD. Fall '93.

Boogiemanland. AN. Fox.

Brave Little Toaster. AN film sequel. Hyperion.

❑ **Bugs Bunny.** *Termite Terrace.* LA/AN film. *Plucky Duck* AN TV spin-off.

❑ **Captain America.** Film. On video. August.

Captain Planet. AN series.

Casper. Film. Amblin.

Charlie Chan. Film. S/D: D Mamet. P: Kirkwood, Hyde.

Chicken Man. AN.

Classics Illustrated. AN series. DIC.

Cobalt 60. AN film.

Conan. *Conan the Adventurer.* Syn AN series. 13 episodes. Fall. Claster TV/Sunbow.

Concrete. Film. S: (D) L. Wilson, C. Thompson. P: Tim Burton.

Cool World. AN/LA film. PP. D: Ralph Bakshi. Out.

The Crow. Film. S: John Shirley. D: Alex Proyce. P: Ed Pressman

Crusader Rabbit New AN series. In development. Fox.

Cyberpunk. Film. S: Steve Roberts. Imagination Factory.

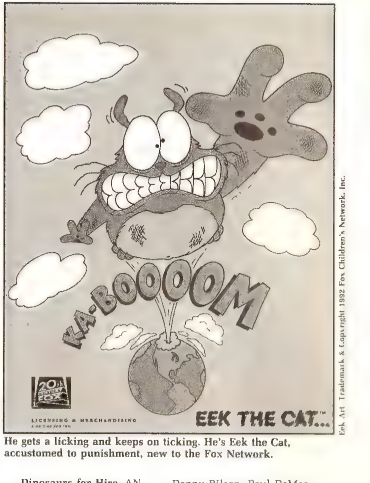
Dan Dare. TV series

Danger Squad. Film. P/D: Leo Fong. W/D: P.R. Cable.

Darkwing Duck. AN syn. ABC series.

Deathlok. Film

❑ **Dennis the Menace.** Film. P/S: John Hughes. D: Patrick Johnson left the project. Mr. Wilson: Walter Matthau. Now shooting. WB. Summer '93. *Dennis the Musical.* S: E. Chambers. Music: Jeff Church. Lyrics: R. Enquist. Chambers. Fall '92.



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He gets a licking and keeps on ticking. He's Eek the Cat, accustomed to punishment, new to the Fox Network.

Dinosaurs for Hire. AN series. In development. Fox.

❑ **Dr. Giggles.** Film. W/Larry Drake.

Dr. Off. Film. Black superhero spoof. P: Tim Reid.

Dr. Strange. Film. Zoetrope. D: Alex Cox. P: F. Coppola.

Dr. Who. AN series. Nel.

Doug. AN. Nickelodeon.

Duckman. AN. C: Everett Peck. Klasky Csupo.

Dudley Do-Right. Film. PP.

Eek the Cat. AN. Fox. D: S. Steve Holland. Nel. Fall.

Elfquest. Film/TV. Abby Lou Prod. Freedom Distrib.

Evangeline. Film. FF.

Family Dog. AN series. Amblin/Nel. Debut delayed.

❑ **Fantastic Four.** Film. EP: Stan Lee. D: Max Kleven. Constantin Film.

❑ **Fearless Fosdick.** AN film. Nel.

❑ **Fish Police.** AN series. Cancelled.

❑ **The Flintstones.** Film. Fred: John Goodman. D: R. Donner. U/Amblin. AN TV film. *I Yabba-Yabba-Doo* Pebbles & Bamm-Bamm marry. Airs February '93. ABC. Second AN TV film. (Pebbles has twins).

Garfield. AN series.

G.I. Joe. Film. S: Anthony & John Gentile. WB.

Goofy. Syn & Sat. AN series *Goof Troop.* WD. Fall.

The Green Arrow. TV. P: Danny Bilson, Paul DeMeo.

The Green Hornet. Film. S: D. Mancini. P: D. Kirschner. U.

❑ **Grimmy.** AN TV. CBS.

Gus & Grizzard. AN pilot. C: Gary K. Wolf. Nel. CBS.

Hopalong Cassidy. Film. S: G. Popper. J. Rosenthal.

❑ **Human Target.** Series. ABC. Summer bow

Inspector Gadget. New AN TV series. DIC.

Jo Jo. Film. P: Lee Caplin. S: Mike Chapman.

Jonny Quest. AN TV movie. HB. X-Mas.

Judge Dredd. Film. Fox. P: C. Lippincott, Ed Pressman.

Li'l Abner. TV. P: Max & Micheline Keller

Little Mermaid. AN prequel TV series. Fall. CBS. WD.

Lone Wolf & Cub. Film. D: John Bruno. P: Ed Pressman. S: Bill Wisher

Lucky Luke. TV series. Terence Hill. SB Comm.

Mai the Psychic Girl. Film D: Tim Burton. S: L. Wilson, C Thompson. P: Burton, Wilson, D. Di Novi. W. Hill. Carolco

Mandrake. Film.

❑ **The Mask.** Film. New Line. Targeted for '93 release.

❑ **The Meteor Man.** Film. S/D R. Townsend. MGM. X-mas

Mr. X. Film. P: Jim Cash & Jack Epps Jr

Monster in My Pocket. AN HB. ABC. S: Glenn Leopold

Nancy. Film. P: P. Muller.
Neil the Horse. AN/LA.
Ninja High School. AN video. U.K. Sun Planning.
❑ **Pagemaster.** AN film. Fox/HB. D: Maurice Hunt.
Joe Palooka. TV pilot. NBC. Viacom. P: Dean Hargrove.
Paparazzi Samurai. AN TV series. P: DIC, Abrams/Gentile.
Peanuts. AN TV & film.
The Phantom. Film. PP. P: B. Sherlock, P. Sjoquist, J. Torv, R. Price. S: K. Shadie. C: Lee Falk, con. D: S. Wincer.
Pico & Columbus. AN film. Bavaria Film.
❑ **Plastic Man.** Film. WB/Amblin. S: Larry Wilson. Summer '93 release.
❑ **The Prince & The Goblin.** AN film. Easter '93.
Prince Valiant. AN series. Family Chan. LA film. S: M. Beckner. Constantin Film. P: B. Eichinger, J. Gorman.
Radio Boy. AN. RB.
Red Sonja. TV. Lancit.
Reid Fleming. Film. S: creator David Boswell. P: M. Weisman, J. Loeb II.
Ren & Stimpy. AN. Nickelodeon.
Richie Rich. Film. P: J. Silver, J. Davis. S: Neil Tolkin.
RoboCop 3. S: Frank Miller & Fred Dekker (D).
Roger Rabbit. New AN short "Trail Mix Up." WD.

Addams Family Art: Hanna-Barbera

The Addams Family **gets animated in a new series this fall. John Astin voices Gomez.**

Rogue Trooper. Film. D: Peter Hewitt. P: Joel Silver.
Rugrats. AN. Nickelodeon.
Rupert the Bear. AN. Nel.
The Saint. Film. S: Terry Hayes. D: Renny Harlin. P: Robert Evans. PP.
Sandman. Film.
❑ **Scooby Doo.** Film. WB. *Pup Named Scooby Doo* returns to ABC Saturday morning.
Secret Agent X-9. AN film.
Sgt. Kabukiman. AN series. Troma. DIC.
Sgt. Rock. Film. P: Joel Silver, Bob Zemeckis. WB.
The Shadow. Film. S: David Koepp. P: Martin Bregman. U.
The She-Hulk. Film. S/D: Larry Cohen. B. Nielsen.
The Silver Surfer. Film. EP: Stan Lee. Constantin Film.
The Simpsons. AN. FBC.
❑ **Speed Racer.** AN TV series. MWS. Fall '93 bow.
Spider-Man. Film. D: Jim Cameron. Carolco. Stage musical. S & lyrics: B. Harman. Music: K. Herrmann. EXP: Stan Lee. D: J. Nash, J. Calamari.
❑ **Starwatcher.** AN film. P: Alain Guiot/Videosystem. S: Moebius & J. Fryszman. D: Moebius, Keith Ingham. PP.
Superboy. Syn TV.
Super-Dave. AN. DIC.
Superman. *Superman: The New Movie.* S: Mark Jones & Cary Bates. To lense in FL.
❑ **Super Mario Bros.** LA film. S: Barry Morrow. D: Rocky Morton, Annabel Jankel. Cast: Bob Hoskins, Dennis Hopper, Fisher Stevens, Samantha Mathis. Shooting.
Swamp Thing. TV. USA.
Tales from the Crypt. HBO.
Tales from the Hart. TV. P: Aaron Spelling.
Tarzan. Syn TV series.
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. LA sequel. Easter '93. S/D: Stuart T. Gillard. AN series. CBS. Syn.
Time Cop. Film. D: Sam Raimi.
Tintin. AN series. HBO.

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Tom & Jerry. AN film. P/D: Phil Roman. Spring '93.

❑ **Toxic Crusaders.** LA film. Troma/New Line. Summer '93 release.

Trouble with Girls. Film. Fox/FF. S: W. Jacobs, G. Jones. P: M. Pepler, N. Tebachnick.

Valentina. TV series. Dementra Hampton. Reteitalia.

Vampirella. Film. S/D: Jim Wynorski.

V for Vendetta. Film. WB. S: Hilary Henkin.

Watchmen. Film. P: J. Silver. Largo.

❑ **We're Back.** AN film. Amblin London/U. Fall '93. S: Patrick Shanley.

Why I Hate Saturn. TV.

Wild Cards. Film. Disney. S: George R.R. Martin. P: Michael Engelberg.

Wizard of Id. Film. Cinergi.

Wolverine. Film.

The X-Men. AN TV series. Fox. Fall. Marvel/Saban. Film. P: Jim Cameron.

Zen. Film. AN series.

❑ **Zorro.** Film. D: Steven Spielberg. Zorro: Andy Garcia. S: Nancy Larson. TriStar. LA TV series. F. Chan. AN TV series. In development. Nel. Broadway musical. P: Fox, Nederlander Organization.

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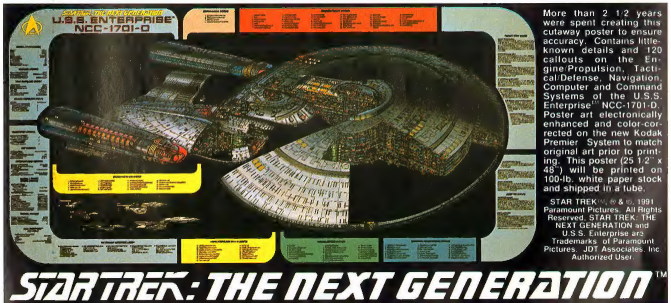

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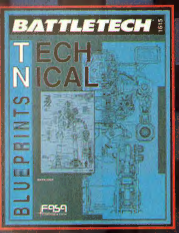

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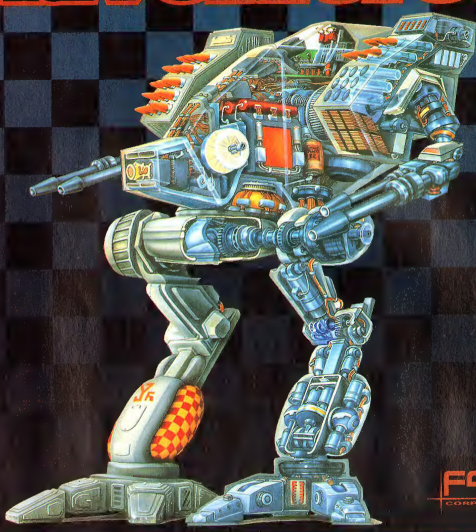

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IMAGE

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